

Withers Ranch issued Stockgrowers Stewardship Award

By Ryan Bonham
Lake County Examiner

A highlight of the Lake County Stockgrowers Association's recent fall meeting and banquet dinner was the announcement of Withers Ranch in Paisley as the recipient of the organization's Stewardship Award.

The award was presented to Alan and Ginger Withers for their efforts watershed enhancement and instituting an eradication program to combat invasive species in the area. The award recognizes individuals that practice responsible management techniques as a part of their ranching operations.

Other award winners also announced during the evening include the Car-



RYAN BONHAM/Lake County Examiner

Lake County Stockgrowers Pres. Jesse Laird, I, presents Alan and Ginger Withers with the Stewardship Award for 2009 during the Stockgrowers Assoc.'s fall meeting, held Wednesday, Nov. 18

cas of Merit award. The Lake County Stockgrowers Assoc. is in its third year of supporting this program. *See related story elsewhere in this edition for more information.*

Other recognition included Christine Taylor as the recipient of the Lake County Stockgrowers Assoc. scholarship this year, and Gabriella Warda as the winner of the Lake

County Stockgrowers heifer, which was donated back by 2007 winner Colton Gilbert.

Plush rancher John O'Keeffe provided a brief update on current public lands issues, while Oregon Young Cattlemen's chairperson Julie Laird informed the attendees of efforts on behalf of the OCA to reach out to the younger generation, and

encourage their involvement.

Outgoing OCA president Bill Moore provided an overview of the efforts at the state level to ensure stockgrowers' concerns were heard in Salem. The OCA is currently working at building coalitions with various groups so as to strengthen their position with the Oregon legislature, he said.

A key highlight of Moore's presentation was the airing of a DVD that explained key issues important to ranchers, particularly when it comes to lobbying on policies relevant to stockgrowers at the state legislature.

"Very few people know that you support 70 percent of the state's wildlife," Moore said. "Some of those that would like to put us out of business have been indoctrinating kids for a generation."

The evening wrapped up with a presentation on brucellosis by state veterinarian Dr. Don Hansen. Oregon has been free of the disease for the last 16 years, Hansen said.