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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phil Ward Returns to Roots as CEO of Oregon FFA

Corvallis, Oregon - Phil Ward is a familiar face across Oregon's agriculture and natural resource industries.

He will now lead Oregon FFA as its CEO.

Ward started his career as a high school agriculture educator and FFA advisor and taught seven years in two school districts. After leaving teaching in 1984, Ward has served as Executive Vice President of the Oregon Farm Bureau, Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon Department of Water Resources, and as State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Oregon. Most recently, Ward's heart for education won out and he returned to teaching as an instructor in Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences.

In announcing Ward's selection as the CEO Kirk Maag, Chair of the Oregon FFA Joint Board, said he's "thrilled to have Phil on board." Maag said, "Oregon FFA will benefit from Phil's experience managing complex budgets, leading mission-driven teams, building grassroots support, and collaborating with volunteer boards of directors. With Phil's experience and deep roots in Oregon agriculture, I can't think of anyone better to lead our organization forward!"

Ward said, "For me, joining Oregon FFA is like coming full circle. I started my career as a high school agriculture educator and FFA advisor. To now have the opportunity to serve an organization that has had such a significant impact on the lives of so many young people, mine included, is extremely meaningful both professionally and personally. In my view, this job is about two key things: helping students have the best possible experience during their time as FFA members and supporting the agriculture educators who lead and work with those students every single day. I am extremely excited to be a part of this team."

Ward will succeed Shawn Dooley, who served as Oregon FFA's CEO in 2019 and 2020. Maag said that "Shawn's steady leadership allowed Oregon FFA to not only survive but thrive during the pandemic. We were fortunate to work with Shawn and our exceptional

team of dedicated employees to ensure Oregon FFA continued to deliver programs and experiences to students despite the obstacles of the past years.” Ward echoed those sentiments: “There has been a really solid foundation laid by past and current FFA leadership. The organization is in great shape with members from every corner of the state with a quality group of agriculture educators leading and teaching them. It’s my job, and that of the rest of the state FFA staff, to build on the foundation that’s in place and help Oregon FFA grow and prosper in the years ahead.”

JD Cant, who serves as Vice-Chair of the Oregon FFA Joint Board, perhaps summed it up best remarking about Ward’s hire: “As a agriculture teacher in northeast Oregon, I am beyond excited to have a leader with the experience, expertise, and skills like Phil Ward to move Oregon FFA "Onward" into the future.” Cant explained, “It gives me great solace to know that Phil Ward will lead our staff, our students, our supporters, and our teachers and is a leader who has truly lived it all, and has walked in many of the shoes that many in FFA now wear. Oregon FFA will be better because of his presence in all aspects of Oregon FFA.”

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