



## REALTORS LAND INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES APEX AWARD WINNERS

**Dan and Michael Murphy share honors  
as APEX 2017 Top National Producer  
at RLI's National Land Conference last  
month in Nashville.**

On March 13, the Realtors Land Institute (RLI) recognized the best in the land business with the APEX Awards. Michael and Dan Murphy with Colorado's M4 Ranch Group shared RLI's most coveted award, the APEX 2017 Top National Producer.

The duo was also recognized as National Broker of the Year for Recreational Land Sales. Other Broker of the Year honorees included Dax Hayden of Hayden Outdoors for Ag Land Sales Ranches; Clint Flowers, ALC, of National Land Realty for Timber Land Sales; Ryan Sampson, ALC, of Eshenbaugh Land Company

for Commercial Land Sales; Danny Smith, ALC, of Smith & Smith Realty for Residential Land Sales; and Troy Louwagie, ALC, of Hertz Real Estate Services for Ag Land Sales Crops as well as Auction Land Sales. In addition to being named Broker of the Year in two categories, Louwagie also won the APEX 2017 Wrangler Award for greatest number of transactions closed in 2017. "The APEX 2017 Award winners are the cream of the crop when it comes to conducting land transactions. RLI is proud to be partnered with *The Land Report* to give these land agents the national industry recognition as a top-producer that they deserve," said RLI CEO Aubrie Kobernus, MBA, RCE. Read more [HERE](#).



**Dan and Michael Murphy of M4 Ranch Group  
celebrate their APEX 2017 Top National  
Producer honors.**



## COURT



## SOUTH

### NEIGHBORS AWARDED MILLIONS IN HOG FARM NUISANCE CASE.

The Chinese owners of Smithfield Foods are on the hook for \$50 million, thanks to a federal court in Raleigh, North Carolina. Ten neighbors filed suit arguing, that the waste treatment methods of the world's largest pork producer were not only substandard but have been willfully ignored by the company for decades. The plaintiffs' attorneys singled out anaerobic lagoons where waste from 15,000 hogs was stored behind livestock pens before being liquefied and sprayed onto nearby fields. "These cases are about North Carolina family property rights and a clean environment," attorney Mona Lisa Wallace told *The News & Observer*. "We are now preparing for the next [trial], which is scheduled for the end of May." Read more [HERE](#).



## PACIFIC

## LAND USE

### WASHINGTON FARMLAND

**WASHINGTON GOVERNOR TO DECIDE FATE OF SOLAR FARM.** Jeff and Jackie Brunson have grown alfalfa, Timothy hay, and other crops on their Central Washington farm in Kittitas County. They want to expand

their farming operation to include a solar power lease to Seattle-based Tuusso Energy, and Gov. Jay Inslee will be the decider. A neighbor formed a nonprofit called Save Our Farms to oppose the installation of photovoltaic panels on 200 acres near Ellensburg, including 80 belonging to the Brunsons. County commissioners also rejected a previous solar farm application and subsequently issued a moratorium for all new ones, including the Brunsons'. But now the contentious debate is out of the county's hands. The state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council has until mid-June to make a recommendation to the governor. "The process really takes away the voice of the local government and the local citizens and local control of what the land is going to look like," said Laura Osiadacz, a county commissioner. Read more [HERE](#).

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## SOUTHWEST

SOLD

### NEW MEXICO RANCHLAND

#### IMUS RANCH SELLS TO RFD-TV

**FOUNDER.** The *Santa Fe New Mexican* reports that Don Imus's 3,400-acre cattle ranch in the Pecos River Valley east of Santa Fe has sold to RFD-TV founder Patrick

Gottsch. The host of *Imus in the Morning* was employed by RFD-TV from 2007 to 2009. Imus and his wife, Deirdre, founded the ranch in 1998 as a 501(c)(3) organization to benefit children with cancer. With more than 20 structures, the ranch features 29,000 square feet of living quarters as well as 35,000 square feet of barns, garages, and other improvements, including a 10-bedroom hacienda, a radio studio, and a full-fledged Western town. Craig Huitfeldt of Bell Tower Keller-Williams represented the Imuses. The ranch was originally listed for \$35 million, reduced to \$29.9 million, and subsequently relisted for \$19.9 million. It ended up on the auction block before Gottsch bought it. The final sales price was not disclosed. Read more [HERE](#).

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WEST

DEVELOPMENT

## WESTERN RANCHLAND

### NPR HIGHLIGHTS ESTATE PLANNING WORKSHOPS FOR LANDOWNERS. All

too often, when older farmers and ranchers retire, no one has been prepared to take their place. National Public Radio's popular *All*

*Things Considered* took a closer look at this unwelcome phenomenon as well as the steps the University of Wyoming and the Western Landowners Alliance are taking to prepare landowning families to develop succession plans. The need is a vital one. A report issued by the National Young Farmers Coalition predicts that in the next 25 years, 63 percent of farmland nationwide will need a new farmer. Without proper planning, many landholdings ultimately end up getting sold and then parceled off. "Then that landscape then is fragmented and is really not available to support agriculture or wildlife and the other values we care about in these landscapes," says Lesli Allison, executive director of the Western Landowners Alliance. "All the projections call for a massive transfer of land in the next decade," Allison adds. "We're going to see many, many millions of acres of land change hands as these farmers and ranchers age." Read more [HERE](#).



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## The Magazine of the American Landowner



### IN OUR SPRING ISSUE:

Join Land Report Publisher Eddie Lee Rider as he goes one-on-one with celebrated Metallica bassist Jason Newsted to discuss one of the artist's many passion projects, his Rockin JN Ranch in Western Montana. To get a heads-up on the Rockin JN, which is listed with Bill McDavid of Hall and Hall, click [HERE](#).



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