

Doyal, Christianson recognized at 38th annual FEW

Randall Doyal and John Christianson were recognized for their service and commitment to the biofuels industry at the International Fuel Ethanol Workshop & Expo

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, USA, June 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Two ethanol industry veterans, each with careers spanning four decades, were recognized for their longtime service and commitment to the biofuels industry Tuesday morning at the world's largest ethanol conference, the International Fuel Ethanol Workshop & Expo (FEW), taking place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, this week.



Randall Doyal, the recently retired CEO of Claremont, Minnesota-based Al-Corn Clean Fuel, received the 2022 FEW High Octane Award for his vision, leadership and advocacy—both locally, at the plants he has served, and at a regional and national level. John Christianson, the founder and current director of Wilmar, Minnesota-based Christianson PLLP, received the 2022 Award of Excellence for helping farmers and investors organize and grow the ethanol industry in its formative years. His firm was also instrumental in the development of innovative financial and accounting software and benchmarking resources that are now used prolifically in the U.S. ethanol industry.

“It’s an honor to recognize people like Randy and John, guys who are among the industry’s longest-serving and most impactful professionals,” said Tom Bryan, president of BBI International and editor of Ethanol Producer Magazine. “John and Randy are among the most dedicated, trusted, engaged leaders in our business—they’ve both been committed to ethanol for decades—and they’re visionaries who have given inordinately to this industry.”

Bryan said the two awards are among the most prestigious accolades in ethanol production and have a history spanning more than two decades. The recipients of each award are nominated by

their peers and selected by all previous years' FEW award winners, along with the members of Ethanol Producer Magazine's editorial advisory board, making up a voting committee of more than 30 industry leaders.

Doyal began his career in 1982, taking a job at a small 1 MMgy ethanol plant in Portales, New Mexico, near his hometown. Not knowing anything about ethanol production—as an aspiring minister and carpenter—he took a job in the plant and ended up turning the opportunity into a lifelong career. After a decade of foundational experience in Portales, Doyal accepted a management position at Al-Corn Clean Fuel in 1995, relocating his family in Claremont, Minnesota. The plant was only 10 MMgy when he arrived but expanded incrementally over the years to 50 MMgy before a major expansion in 2017 took the facility up to 130 MMgy. In addition to managing the plant and its many expansions over nearly 30 years, Doyal was also a founding member of the Renewable Products Marketing Group, better known as RPMG, a marketing cooperative that now represents 19 plants across seven states and is one of the country's leading ethanol marketing firms. He also served as chairman of the Renewable Fuels Association in 2015-2016 and has held other industry posts.

Upon receiving the High Octane Award, Doyal expressed his gratitude to his many friends and colleagues in the ethanol industry, and said he believes his career in biofuels was, in his words, "divine intervention."

"I don't consider myself an environmentalist but a steward. And that's what's so wonderful about this industry, the characteristics of stewardship, I see over and over and over again from all of you folks," Doyal said. "You want to do more, use less, do it better, use less energy, find new products and probably the one thing that makes it so exciting for me is that we work together, we collaborate, that's the neatest thing about this industry."

Christianson, who grew up on a farm just a few miles from where he would start his renowned accounting firm, Christianson PLLP, also began his career knowing very little about ethanol. As a young certified public accountant in Wilmar, Minnesota, in the early 1980s, Christianson gained experience and made important connections during the challenging farm crisis years. In the early '90s, he started working with a farmer co-op in Benson, Minnesota, helping with the formation of what would become the Chippewa Valley Ethanol Co. ethanol plant. Helping CVEC turned out to be a turning point. Christianson's involvement with ethanol rapidly took off, and his firm grew and expanded its services, eventually becoming a 90-plus person, full-service CPA and business advisory firm that it is today widely relied upon by ethanol producers. He and his team, listening to their clients, created new and innovative ways to help ethanol producers marry their financial and grain accounting systems. They created Intelego, an enterprise planning software now branded as Beyond, which is currently used in as many as 80 U.S. ethanol plants. His company was instrumental in developing dozens of ethanol plants during the construction boom of 2000's and is maybe most recognized for its Ethanol Plant Benchmarking program used throughout the U.S. ethanol industry. Christianson left his managing partner role at the firm to become a director in 2021. He is also a member of the Minnesota Governor's Biofuels Council

and current board member of the American Coalition for Ethanol.

"I've had the opportunity to work in the industry for many years and I don't consider it work because I enjoy going to work every day," Christianson said. "The reason I enjoy it and I think the reason that the industry has such great future is because of the people and the people that this industry is made of, their character, their passion, their values."

His nominator pointed out Christianson's involvement in the development of early U.S. ethanol plants, especially those built in Minnesota. "He was truly instrumental in the development the first dry-mill ethanol plants built in Minnesota," said his nominator. "In the early days, it was common for him to get onto an airplane with people like Ron Fagen to meet with a group interested in building an ethanol plant. He may have not known where they were headed, or when they would be home, but being a farmer himself, he knew the impact these ethanol plants could have—and so he went and did what he could to help grow this industry."

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