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## **Nonpareil-Idaho Potato Packers focus on high quality Idaho Russets**

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Nonpareil-Idaho Potato Packers is a three-generation, family-owned packer and shipper specializing in Idaho Russet potatoes. Since the company's founding as Idaho Potato Packers in 1946 by Harold Abend, it "has been committed to providing the best Idaho potatoes that the state can offer," said Stephen Abend, who has been chief operating officer of the Blackfoot, ID-based company since 2014.

Originally founded in New York City, the company relocated to Idaho in the 1950s "to better monitor growth and quality," Abend said. "Today, the company maintains the same keystones that it was built on over 70 years ago: unmatched quality and customer service. Nonpareil continues to provide the very best Idaho Russet potatoes available."

The Nonpareil name predates Idaho Potato Packers, having been first trademarked in 1924. IPP acquired the Nonpareil brand from J.M. McCauley and Sons in New York City in the 1950s, and it became the premium label of Nonpareil-Idaho Potato Packers.

"We feel our Nonpareil brand is certainly our premium foodservice brand," Abend said, "although we are offering foodservice packs under the Idaho Potato Packers brand as well as the Angus brand and, for foodservice No. 2s, the Magic brand.

"The IPP brand was our original brand," he said, "but we had discontinued that brand for quite some time, probably over 20 years."

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However, within the past year, “we have revived that brand and are offering it in both foodservice packs and consumer packs.”

Also in the past year, upon the retirement of Sales Manger Steve Thorne, the company has named Rulon Robinson sales manager. “He was on the sales desk,” Abend said. “I have moved him from salesman to sales manager. He has been with us seven and a half years.”

Also on sales with the company is Dandee Hale.

“We are strictly a Russet potato shipper,” Abend said. That is, of course, how the company started, as Russets were essentially the only type of potato being grown commercially in Idaho in the 1940s and for many decades thereafter.

In recent years, the state has diversified into other potato varieties, and Nonpareil experimented with them for a time. But then the company moved away from reds, yellows, and such to focus again, exclusively on the Idaho Russets. “That allows us to be the best we can be on providing the very best Russet potatoes,” he said.

Abend said he was looking forward to attending the PMA Foodservice show. It is “a very important show from a foodservice perspective,” he said. “The leaders in the produce industry are in attendance, and we consider ourselves a leader in the produce industry from the Russet potato standpoint.”

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