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**WESTERN PISTACHIO ASSOCIATION TO CHANGE NAME**  
***Organizational name change part of new strategy; new officers elected***

FRESNO, CA – February 24, 2011 – The Western Pistachio Association (WPA) is announcing that the organization will change its name to American Pistachio Growers. The new name is part of the WPA’s goal to effectively market the growing industry’s products domestically and abroad. The name change will be in full effect by this summer.

The changes were made formal at the WPA Annual Membership Meeting late yesterday by the grower-run organization, energized by the Pistachio Industry Annual Conference, where it was verified the industry had a bumper crop last fall, with an increase of approximately 48-percent harvested nuts over the prior year.

“American quality is valued worldwide,” said Brian Blackwell, outgoing WPA Chairman and owner of Blackwell Farming in Bakersfield, California. “The new name makes clear the country of origin and that’s meaningful to our customers internationally.”

“There’s a food revival happening around the world, where consumers are increasingly interested in knowing the source of their food,” said Jim Zion, incoming Chairman and Managing Director of Meridian Nut Growers in Clovis, California. “For that reason, we want to bring our growers to the forefront and include them in the name. There’s a certain assurance that’s inferred when you put your name on a product and we’re doing just that.”

**WPA Elects New Board of Directors, Officers**

Results of the Association’s recent Board of Directors election were announced with Officers designated as follows by the organization’s membership: Chairman: Jim Zion; Vice Chairman: Gary Smith of Eriksson, LLC, Visalia, California; and Secretary/Treasurer: Larry Lowder, Alkali Hollow Farms, Madera, California. The following additional members comprise the Board of Directors:

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Company</b>
H.P. “Corky” Anderson	Pioneer Nursery
Brian Blackwell	Blackwell Farming Co.
Mia Cohen	Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella, Inc.
Jeff Curry	Jeff Curry & Associates
Thomas Dille	Little Creek
Larry Easterling	Kettleman Pistachio Growers
Dr. Robert Lake	Pistachios Unlimited
Larry Lowder	Alkali Hollow Farms
Steven Moore	Huntley-Moore Farms
Richard Paslay	Agri-World
George Schweers	Eagle Ranch
Steve Seplak	SAS-Z Nuts
Gary Smith	Eriksson
Jimi Valov	Valov & Sons Farming
Brian Watte	George Watte & Sons
Dr. Michael Woolf	California Valley Land Co.
Jim Zion	Meridian Nut Growers

Board members represent pistachio producers from California, Arizona and New Mexico.

The Western Pistachio Association is a voluntary trade association representing U.S. pistachio growers. The Fresno, CA based organization has over 400 members representing pistachio production in the states of California, Arizona and New Mexico. These states represent nearly 100 percent of the domestic pistachio production.