



Media Advisory

## **Need for Guest Worker Visa Program in Tri-Cities, Drives Opening of wafla Training Center**

*More than 7,500 H2A guest workers are already employed seasonally throughout the Tri-Cities, Yakima Valley and Columbia Basin*

KENNEWICK, Wash – Wafla (formerly the Washington Farm Labor Association) is a non-profit agriculture association with a large membership base in the greater Tri-Cities area. Wafla works in conjunction with local seasonal employers to provide a legal and stable workforce for the regions' large agriculture industry.

As demand for seasonal workers grows the new wafla Training Center will help educate local growers about H2A visas for guest workers. Statewide this year, it's estimated that 15,000 agricultural guest workers will be certified. The need for guest workers in Washington State increased 34 percent per year from 2011 through 2015, and continued growth is forecasted.

Training Center programs will educate employers and crew leaders on HR best practices, leadership, and regulatory updates. Facilities will be home base for our new COO and Field Services Director. It includes a video studio, conference room, and classroom for up to 60 attendees. The space will also be open to the wider community to host events.

## **Wafla Training Center Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House**

**When:** Thursday, December 1  
4:00pm – Ribbon Cutting (Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber)  
3:00pm to 6:00pm – Open House

**Where:** wafla Training Center  
3180 W. Clearwater Avenue, Suite I  
Kennewick, WA

**Who:** New wafla COO George Zanatta and Jon Warling, wafla Board Chair  
Invited: wafla current/potential members; area businesses; professional partners; friends & neighbors.

**What:** Speak with local growers and wafla COO George Zanatta about H2A employment trends and need for additional guest workers to fuel the local economy.

Media Contact: Eric Schudiske: 206-310-3597