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Dinner Prelude to the Nebraska Great Gardens Symposium

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Welcome for Friday, March 9 dinner prelude to the Nebraska Great Gardens Symposium on Saturday at the UNL City Campus Union:

It's a pleasure to welcome you to the University of Nebraska here in Lincoln. I'm delighted to be asked to join you for this dinner prelude to your Nebraska Great Gardens Symposium tomorrow. I'm also pleased to be able to welcome you to East Campus tonight, and to the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and I understand you'll be meeting at the City Campus Union tomorrow. I am glad you have the opportunity to visit both campuses, and I hope you will come back when they are in bloom. As a newcomer to Nebraska myself – my wife Virginia and I arrived on a cold, snowy day last December, and I began my position here Jan. 2 – I'm certainly looking forward to the arrival of spring. I have been told what a joy it is to be on this campus when plants and trees are in bloom, and when that special sense of spring renewal surrounds us.

As I said, my wife Virginia and I slid into Lincoln on a blustery, icy day in December, but the welcome we received upon arrival was very warm, and people have been so cordially welcoming ever since that we feel we already know what people here mean when they say "there is no place like Nebraska."

One of the enjoyable things about being a newcomer is the pleasure of learning more about Nebraska and the University. I plan to travel the state a lot in the next few months to learn more about Nebraska, about the hopes and

dreams Nebraskans hold for this state, as well as the ways they think the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources can help them. I hope I will have the opportunity to visit with many of you during those travels.

I thought tonight I'd share with you a few of the facts I've learned about the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since my arrival, because I find them especially interesting, and thought you might, also.

UNL is the primary research and doctoral degree-granting institution in Nebraska, and as Nebraska's land-grant university, it serves as the flagship for the entire University system. The University of Nebraska was officially chartered as a land-grant university on Feb. 15, 1869, and the College of Agriculture was established in 1872. The first program of graduate education west of the Mississippi River was established right here in the 1886. The University of Nebraska became a member of the select Association of American Universities in 1909, and has among its famous alumni authors Willa Cather and Mari Sandoz, anthropologist Loren Eisely, Pulitzer-prize winning journalists James Risser and Marjorie Lundstrom, and Nobel prize-winning scientists George W. Beadle and Donald Crum. Johnny Carson also is an alumnus.

We in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources here at the University are proud of the work we do in research, teaching, and extension education to serve the citizens of this state. We see ourselves as partners with Nebraska. As you know, the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum is a partnership

between IANR and the private, nonprofit membership-organization NSA, Inc. I am so pleased that the Arboretum takes the resources of the university and IANR to the people of Nebraska. I understand that the Arboretum's six person staff supports the local efforts of 52 affiliate public gardens in 34 different communities across Nebraska, and provides funding and technical assistance for close to 100 community landscaping projects each year. To date, I'm told, the Arboretum has worked in over 170 cities, towns, and villages across Nebraska to fulfill the Arboretum's mission to "enrich lives through the beauty and wonder of plants."

I always have believed that people who plant trees to shade a future generation, and who plant flowers to brighten our days, are people of vision who enrich our lives, and the lives of our children, and our children's children. I thank you for your vision, for your commitment to the Arboretum and, for all you do for Nebraska! We are so glad you are here with us tonight, and I look forward to visiting with you, now and in the future.