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Ribbon Cutting at Kimmel Education and Research Center
November 1, 2005
Nebraska City
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

It is marvelously fitting that we gather here in Nebraska City on this lovely fall afternoon to officially celebrate this wonderful new center. Fall is a traditional time of harvest in Nebraska, and for many of us there is a deep and abiding satisfaction in bringing a good crop to fruition. Apple harvests at Nebraska City orchards long have brought visitors here each year for fresh fruit and cider.

Today we gather in Nebraska City to celebrate another kind of harvest, it too the result of careful planning and planting. Today we celebrate fruition of a dream. As we cut the ribbon on this grand new building, we already are dreaming of the seeds for future harvests it will help grow – seeds of benefit to Nebraska and Nebraskans.

New classroom space here will be so helpful in providing educational programs of benefit to so many Nebraskans. The office space and the viticulture and specialty forest crop laboratories will enhance and strengthen our work on behalf of our state. We look with great anticipation to future harvests of scientific discoveries and educational programs that are part of our land-grant mission in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

We are your land-grant university, and your land-grant university belongs to you. The value of this university is yours. Our harvest is knowledge – that's our product, and we harvest that knowledge for you. We discover knowledge through research, and we do that for you and your neighbors and all Nebraskans. Once new knowledge is discovered, we share it with you, and very often with the world. We provide solid, research-based knowledge people can use to make their own reasoned, well-informed choices and decisions.

But we don't just deliver knowledge to you – we learn from

you, too. I am a fervent believer that the best land-grant universities ever are those that are fully-connected and engaged with the people of their respective states. We in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources believe in that engagement. We work hard at it. We see ourselves as partners with Nebraska. Being a good partner is vital to successfully carrying out our mission.

To that end, we interact regularly with our constituents, whether one-on-one or in more formal meetings and listening sessions, to be in touch with your concerns and expectations.

Once research leads to the discovery of new knowledge, we transfer that knowledge to others in our on-campus classrooms and teaching laboratories. We transfer it throughout Nebraska through our statewide extension-education programs. Extension is one of the key components of the land-grant university mission, and I consider extension the best out-of-classroom educational-opportunity ever yet devised. We are so looking forward to the rich transfer of knowledge we expect will occur

here, in this new center, down through the years, as it occurs in a myriad of ways all across Nebraska. Centers such as this one help us take the resources, riches and technologies of the university to Nebraskans. Partnerships such as the one we see here today are absolutely necessary if we all, working together, are to help Nebraska grow and prosper.

It is my great honor, on behalf of everyone in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, to thank everyone here who has been part of dreaming the dream of this center, part of planting and planning and bringing the dream to fruition. I think that when the late Mr. and Mrs. Kimmel established the Richard P. and Laurine Kimmel Charitable Foundation, they did so with a dedicated and wonderfully insightful vision of how they might continue their commitment to their community, this region, and their state by enhancing the quality-of-life here through education, arts, agriculture, humanities, and human services. We in the Institute are so very pleased to be part of helping to carry out this vision.

And as we celebrate the coming to fruition of the dream that led to this building, we already look, with great anticipation and excitement, to the coming harvests of all that will occur here down through the coming years for Nebraskans.

Thank you for allowing me, on behalf of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, to be part of this event. It truly is a great day in Nebraska!

Thank you.