2007

ABN Noon Speech (Short version)

John Owens
University of Nebraska - Lincoln, jowens2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech
Part of the Agriculture Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech/192

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Agriculture and Natural Resources, Institute of (IANR) at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in John Owens: Speeches & Appearances by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
Folks, because we find ourselves in a time crunch, I’m going to forego the terrific speech I planned to give today and quickly make five key points. Please know I will be happy to provide additional information on any of them at any time:

**Key point 1:** Agriculture is Nebraska’s leading industry. One in three Nebraska jobs – in both rural and urban settings – depends on it. Nebraska’s dependence on agriculture is growing. In 1990 the number was “one” in four jobs.

With so much of our population living in urban areas, people may not always grasp the significance of agriculture in Nebraska. The significance is this: One in three jobs depends upon it. Whether you live in Harrison or Omaha, whether you are on Mountain Time or Central Time, agriculture affects your life – and not just in the sense that we all have to eat, although a safe and abundant food supply seems to me a powerful inducement for
valu"ng an indus'ry. Yet it goes beyond that he"re. As Nebraska’s "chief" industry, agriculture "sup"ports" Nebraska’s economy.

**Key point 2:** When you’re looking to grow success, you look to your strengths. Agriculture is a "defi"ne" Nebraska strength. Value-added industries that use the tremendous commodities Nebraska “pro"duces are an "absolute natural". Biosciences are one of our country’s "dynam"ic growth areas. Nebraska is well-positioned to build that industry here.”

**Key point 3:** The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is Nebraska’s "primary pro"vider” of agricultural and natural resource "pro"grams in support of Nebraska agriculture. When we say agriculture, we mean "every"thing from the farm gate to the restaurant plate. Production. Food safety. New product development. Resource management. Water. Rural development. Families-and-youth development. Nutrition. Animal care. Some of the "greatest sc"ience” anyone could "ever" dream. The Institute is a "primary-engine" for economic and social sustainability and growth in Nebraska.
Key point 4: The University returns, with interest, dollars Nebraska invests with us. The handout at your tables titled “Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources – at work for Nebraska,” outlines a number of ways we do that. One example at UNL notes that work done has added $50 to $70 per head for cattle in this state over the past seven years. At the $50 rate per head that was $130 million more for Nebraskans in 2006 alone. That’s not a one-time gain. The gain is yearly. While the number of cattle on feed differs some from year to year, in this beef state it is always significant. For today’s purposes, let’s multiply $130 million per year by seven years. We’re approaching $1 billion more in less than a decade for Nebraska producers because of just this one research project that added value to their product. You will find other impacts in the handout entitled: “At Work for Nebraska” on each of your tables.

Yes, our work provides good return on investment. Which brings me to key point five:

Both Governor Heineman and many of you senators have
been clear that while you intend to develop a tight state budget, you do value key strategic investments for Nebraska’s future.

This session the university seeks two strategic investments in keeping Nebraska agriculture competitive and promoting economic development.

The Greater Nebraska Project seeks a one-time investment of $14.3 million to enhance or replace 30- to 40-year-old buildings at three research-and-extension centers all located away from Lincoln. These buildings can’t support today’s research-and-education needs, and they certainly won’t be able to support tomorrow’s needs.

The University also is requesting $3 million for each year of the 2007-2009 biennium for academic Programs of Excellence.

Research and education are vital to Nebraska remaining an agricultural leader, and to providing the skilled workforce so critically necessary to power a growing biosciences industry. The Greater Nebraska Project and the Programs of Excellence requests are key investments for Nebraska, vital to the research
and education necessary to grow and sustain Nebraska’s economy and its good life.

As productive partners with and for Nebraska, we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources know these investments will return interest to our state. We have a long and proud history of doing just that.

Thank you.