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Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory Open House

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Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory Open House 9:40 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2007 Whitman, Nebraska John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

Please let me also extend a welcome to everyone attending today's Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory openhouse. It is wonderful to see you here, and it is great to be back. I know this is going to be a good, informative day, and I thank each and every member of our Institute of Agriculture-and-Natural Resources community who has worked to make this open house a success. I have a special thank you for today's co-sponsors and exhibitors who are providing such useful information. And a sincere thank you to each of you attending today's open house. You're the reason why we're here.

We say in the Institute of Agriculture-and Natural-Resources that we are partners with Nebraska, and we take our partnerships seriously. To us, partnership is a two-way street of give and take, where each partner brings our best

skills and talents to the partnership. We know communication is vital, with each partner providing candid communication that identifies, discusses, and resolves issues, and builds for tomorrow's successes. We ask your help in fostering such communication.

As your land-grant university, we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources are at work for Nebraska all across our state, through our 83 county extension offices serving all 93 Nebraska counties, through our offices, classrooms, and laboratories in Lincoln, and through our research and extension sites strategically-located across Nebraska.

Certainly, the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory is here for a reason, and I'm going to talk about that just a bit today. I'm also going to talk about how, as your land-grant university, our faculty, staff, and students daily are at work for Nebraska. I also will talk about the vision and THE expectations I have for Nebraska's future, and the Institute's role in that future.

First, let me talk about the "why" of Gudmundsen and other University of Nebraska research and extension sites. These sites allow us to put university resources as close to Nebraskans as possible. It is a deliberate choice. We do so throughout Nebraska, so the research-and-extension-education needs of diverse parts of our state best can-be-met, within the limits of the resources available to us.

There is no question resources affect what we do, just as personal resources affect what we all do in our personal lives. We deal with this reality every day as we strive to carry out our land-grant university mission to bring the resources of the university to the citizens of our state. We do that in many ways, including the work done here, and at other sites. Last year we celebrated 25 years of work for Nebraska here at Gudmundsen. Earlier this month we celebrated 50 years of work for Nebraska at the Haskell Agricultural Laboratory near Concord. In 2005 we celebrated 35 years of work for Nebraska at the High Plains Ag Lab near Sidney.

North Platte, the oldest of our regional research-and-extension centers, was established in 1903. We've been at work for Nebraska at that center for 104 years. The Panhandle Research-and-Extension Center at Scottsbluff was established in 1909. In two years, we'll mark that 100-year anniversary. We have a long-and-proud legacy of being at work for Nebraska throughout this state. We intend to go right on lengthening that legacy, and we intend to keep it strong.

As Nebraska's primary-provider of agricultural and natural resources programs, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is critical to the vision for Nebraska I'm going to talk about today. And let me be clear -- when we say agriculture in the Institute, we mean everything from the farm gate to the restaurant plate. Production, food safety, new product development, agribusiness, competitive science, resource management, water, rural development,

families, youth and communities, nutrition, and so much "Agriculture" more is covered by that term in the Institute.

You know, as I do, that the important work that occurs here at Gudmundsen contributes both to Nebraska's economy and Nebraska's way of life. We have the opportunity to hear more about that work today, with a variety of interesting topics that include grazing, economics of calving systems, heifer development systems, and more.

Much more.

If you've heard me speak before, you know I am a tremendous believer in land-grant universities, and often describe them as three-legged stools. It's not my original illustration -- it has been around a long time. Research, teaching, and extension education are the stool's three legs. All three closely intertwine in the Institute. We conduct research to add value to Nebraska commodities, develop new products and grow emerging markets, and sustain and protect the environment, all are key to Nebraska's position as a powerhouse agricultural state. We do research for

Nebraska's human resources – its youth, families, and communities.

Extension education carries new knowledge discovered through research all across Nebraska, so Nebraskans can put it to immediate use in their lives. That new knowledge also is taught in our classrooms and laboratories in the College of Agricultural Sciences-and-Natural Resources.

CASNR helps build the well-prepared workforce necessary for the 21st century, with the leadership skills so very essential to help Nebraska communities survive and thrive.

As state dollars in support of land-grant universities decline, there are concerns university-budget issues will mean more and more research follows research dollars, rather than state's needs. This issue, voiced throughout the United States, concerns us all.

We are especially conscious of that concern in the Institute, and I tell you straight out -- your Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources will remain *firmly focused* on Nebraskans' needs in both applied and appropriate basic

research. That's our job. We are your land-grant university.

Meeting Nebraska's needs is why we're here.

Let me also tell you I expect our extension division to remain a leader in connecting Nebraskans with the resources your land-grant university offers. I am a firm-believer that extension education is the best educational method yet devised outside the traditional classroom to deliver new knowledge. It is absolutely vital to Nebraska.

Research, teaching, and extension education are what we do. Every day. That's how we're at work for Nebraska.

I've mentioned several of my expectations for

Nebraska's future and the Institute's role in that future, and in the next few minutes I'd like to talk more about that. I welcome hearing your thoughts and expectations throughout the day.

So. When I look to Nebraska's future, and the Institute's place in helping build that future, I expect this: I expect agriculture will remain Nebraska's leading industry, and its importance will grow. It already has. In 1990, one

in four Nebraskans depended upon agriculture in some way for their livelihood. A study released last year by the Nebraska Policy Institute tells us that number now is one in three.

Smart people build on their strengths. Agriculture is a Nebraska strength. Nebraskans are smart people. Value-added products from Nebraska's tremendous agricultural commodities, as well as the biosciences – renewable resources for fiber, fuel, and food -- are naturals for growing our state's economy. I expect they will. I also expect the Institute will lead in providing the knowledge and education Nebraska needs to grow its agricultural strength.

I expect – no, I know -- we will go on providing a tremendous education for students, an education that leads to lucrative, fulfilling careers. All students interested in science, in agriculture, in people, in helping lead our state and world, can find tremendous educational-opportunities in our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis also offers students excellent educational opportunities leading to rewarding careers.

A strategic plan guides our work in the Institute. It has three themes that basically boil down to this:

- One, we're going to work with Nebraskans to see

 Nebraska's natural resources our wildlife, our

 grasslands, our very soil and water are

 preserved_and_sustained so they in turn can

 sustain future generations.
- heritage of agricultural expertise to help grow our state's economy and keep our food supply safe and abundant. We're going to help grow Nebraska's future in biosciences, providing naturally renewable food, fuel, and fiber for the future.
- Three, we're going to continue to work for and with Nebraska's families, youth, and

communities to preserve and strengthen the

very fabric of our society. When we talk about
the good life of Nebraska, we're intent on
making it even better, from our most rural
communities to our most urban.

Now, I want to be very-clear that when I say we," I don't mean just those who work in the Institute of Agriculture and-Natural Resources. I mean everyone here today, and all others throughout our state with whom we partner. It takes all of us, working-together, to build a strong future."

I see your very important role in all this, and the role of all our partners, as supporting the development and distribution of the knowledge Nebraska needs, so you and others can take that knowledge and, with Nebraska ingenuity, skill, and determination, build Nebraska's future for all generations. We have a highly successful, century-plus legacy that shows just how well this works for our state. We're going to go right on doing it.

A recent independent study found the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources provides a conservative 15-to-1 return on your state tax dollars invested with us. That's money in Nebraskans' pockets, and that's good for us all.

These are some of the many ways we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources are at work for Nebraska. We'll learn about other ways today, also, as we hear about the exciting-work being done for Nebraska here at Gudmundsen. Thank you again to everyone who is part of this day, from all planners and presenters, to all participants. We really are glad you're here. Thank you.

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