

April 2007

## The Leading Object: April 2007

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## Perspectives

**“Much of what is required for 21<sup>st</sup> century success (innovation, technology transfer, human capital enhancement, productivity improvement, networking, and quality of environment and place) is directly addressed through the mission and operations of IANR.”**



**John C. Owens**  
NU Vice President and  
Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

That quote from the “At Work for Nebraska” report, prepared for us by Battelle, of Columbus, Ohio, is to me one of the most satisfying statements in the entire document.

And yes. I do enjoy the words, “... it is evident that IANR’s research, teaching, and extension activities are having powerful impacts on Nebraska’s economic growth and on economic and social sustainability in the State of Nebraska. In FY2005, IANR received an annual appropriation of \$71.6 million from the State of Nebraska. ... the estimated annual impacts of IANR programs far exceed \$750 million in direct economic output and savings benefits for Nebraska, a leverage ratio conservatively estimated to be greater than ten to one. This number does not include the impact of IANR’s direct and indirect expenditures (salaries, benefits, capital improvements, etc.) ... which represents an additional leverage ratio of approximately five to one. Taken together, the impact of IANR’s programs and expenditures represents a leverage of state funding that exceeds fifteen to one.”

What a tremendous return on investment for Nebraska. Who among us, given the opportunity, wouldn’t open an account with someone who’d return us \$15 for each dollar we invested with them?

The “At Work” report (found on the Web at <http://atworkfornebraska.unl.edu>) offers a wealth of information for reporting the impact of IANR work. We’ve led the way in research, teaching, and extension education for agriculture, natural resources, and youth, families, and communities. We’ve returned \$15 on every state tax dollar invested with us.

continued on page 2

# The Leading Object

The Morrill Act of 1862 established a Land Grant University in each state where The Leading Object would be instruction in agriculture and related fields.



April 2007

## AgLEC Receives Teaching Award

The Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication (AgLEC) has received a major University of Nebraska teaching award that recognizes its “dedication to high quality.”

The University-wide Departmental Teaching Award (UDTA) recognizes a department that has made a unique and significant contribution to teaching.

“It recognizes the faculty and students and the people wanting to take our courses,” said Dan Wheeler, Head of the Department. “It’s very exciting.”

The award was announced April 9 by NU President James B. Milliken.

“We’re grateful and extremely pleased with this department’s commitment to teaching and to the success of its students,” Milliken said. “This award provides us the opportunity to recognize an entire department’s dedication to high quality.”

The department receives \$25,000 along with the award, which Wheeler said will be used for programming.

A committee of peers selected the department, citing AgLEC faculty members for using new technologies and teaching methods, for evaluating the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of curriculum, and for setting high standards for educating undergraduate and graduate students.

Wheeler said the department’s nine teachers and four graduate teaching assistants have been at the forefront in the use of technology.

“This department has raised the standard of teaching excellence, distinguishing itself through notable awards and achievements,” the award nomination states. “The AgLEC faculty is a highly dedicated, hard working, student-



Brett Hampton

**Dan Wheeler heads AgLEC, which received a University-wide Departmental Teaching Award.**

oriented faculty group that functions efficiently and effectively as a team.”

John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR praised the department.

“AgLEC is a department where the faculty models the very best practices in college teaching and it shows in the achievements of their students,” Owens said.

AgLEC initially was established in 1918 as the Department of Agricultural Education. It was merged with the Department of Agricultural Communications in 1992.

After the merger, the department implemented undergraduate and graduate studies in formal leadership, as well as an agricultural journalism major.

The department currently offers two undergraduate degrees – agricultural education with a teaching option or an agricultural leadership option, and ag journalism. At a graduate level, the department offers a master of science in leadership education and an interdepartmental doctoral program in Human Sciences and Leadership Studies.

An external review team of faculty from other universities called UNL’s AgLEC one of the leading departments in the country in its last review in 2003.

Perspectives continued from page 1

That's money in Nebraskans' pockets, through new products developed, value-added to current products, and savings realized through avenues such as best management practices. That's good for Nebraska.

We've repeatedly been telling the story of IANR's role as an innovation engine for the state that returns \$15 for each tax dollar invested with us, to illustrate the tremendous return Nebraska receives when it invests in higher education.

It is an important story. It has to be told. Repeatedly.

Yet as good as the story of our return on state tax dollars makes me feel, the sentence with which I began this column today provides me added enthusiasm. That sentence speaks to our future, and to the future of Nebraska.

Battelle found us to directly address "much of what is required for 21<sup>st</sup> century success."

That shows we are on track in our strategic planning, our blueprint for where we are heading to help Nebraska sustain and

grow a successful future. It is a focus we continually must maintain and strengthen.

The report notes: "IANR has been, and will continue to be a primary engine for economic and social sustainability and growth in the State of Nebraska. ... IANR is an institution focused on improving and sustaining Nebraska – improving its economy, preserving its environment, growing a skilled workforce, and contributing to continuing social sustainability and responsibility. ... IANR is positively impacting the State of Nebraska in significant ways through both its diverse array of activities, as well as its close partnerships with producers and community stakeholders – without these partnerships, much of IANR's accomplishments could not be achieved."

We in the Institute long have noted we are partners with Nebraska. We value our partnerships highly. We take them very seriously. As an innovation engine for the state, we *are* at work for Nebraska.



## Statewide Arboretum Recognized

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum has been recognized for innovation by the American Public Gardens Association.

The APGA has given the arboretum the 2007 Award for Program Excellence, which will be presented this summer at a conference in Washington, D.C.

The award recognizes APGA members who have shown innovation in developing new programs, that being the Nebraska Green Space Stewardship Initiative. The initiative is the arboretum's 10-year outreach program designed to inspire the creation of sustainable public landscapes in Nebraska communities.

**Need to meet with the  
Vice President/Vice Chancellor?  
Drop-ins each Friday from 3-5 p.m.\*  
John C. Owens**

NU Vice President for  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR

202 Ag Hall • (402) 472-2871

\*Occasionally Dr. Owens will be called away on University business.

## Holling Awards Recognize Seven

Six faculty members and one teaching assistant have been given the 2007 Holling Family Awards for Teaching Excellence in Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Senior Faculty Excellence Awards were received by Terence Hejny, Extension Educator in Cass County, Barbara Ogg, Extension Educator in Lancaster County, Madhavan Soundararajan, senior lecturer of biochemistry, and David Varner, Extension Educator in Dodge County.

Junior Faculty Excellence Awards were received by Suat Irmak, Assistant Professor of Biological Systems Engineering and Irrigation Specialist; and Darrell Mark, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics.

Teaching Assistant Sara Daubert, a lecturer of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication, also received the award.

Editor - Lori McGinnis • Layout - Anne Moore

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The Leading Object is published monthly for all IANR staff members by Communications & Information Technology. Questions or story ideas may be directed to the editor at 106 ACB, 0918; via e-mail (lmcginnis2@unl.edu) or via fax (402-472-0025).

## UNL OEA, KUDO Recipients Announced

The following are recipients of Outstanding Employee and KUDO awards over the past several months:

### KUDO

Diane Schroeder, a computer support specialist at the Haskell Ag Lab, received a KUDO Award for April. A nominator wrote, "Her technical skills and abilities have positively enhanced our job performance and the quality of work of all staff who utilize her services."



Carol Wusk, secretary specialist in the Dean's office of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, received the January KUDO Award. Nominators said "Carol's consistent high-quality performance is mirrored in the positive contributions she makes to the climate in the Dean's office."



### OEA for Managerial/Professional Staff

Terence Spencer, Research Technologist with the Department of Entomology, has received an OEA for May and June. A nominator wrote "Spence's contributions to my program extend beyond the productivity measured by grants and publications. His enthusiasm and good nature are infectious."



Jeff Bassford, Manager and Business and Finance Assistant in the IANR Finance and Personnel Office, received an OEA for March and April. One nominator wrote Bassford "is without exaggeration the best performer of any person who has occupied the position in my 29-plus years with the university."



continued on page 3

## UNL Alumnus Develops Writing Hobby at Age 98

Not many people wait till their 90s to take up writing, but that's just what University of Nebraska alumnus Russell Hughes did.

In the last two years, Hughes, 98, has written

more than 70 stories about his life on his family farm near Platte Center and Albion and his times at the University. Hughes writes in longhand, then gives the stories to his son-in-law, Jerry Flora of Overland Park, Kansas, who types and even copyrights them. He has written about 300 typed pages in the last two years.

What topics does he choose for his articles? "Anything I thought that could be interesting," said Hughes, who lives in Fremont.

4-H is a popular topic. Hughes says he is the only living member of the 4-H dairy cattle judging team that won a national



Hughes

contest in Memphis, Tennessee and went to an international contest in England in 1927. He writes:

*At the national contest at Memphis we were to compete with about 40 state champion teams with 120 individuals, so we could hardly expect to win and were very surprised when the results were announced at a big 4-H banquet and we were the winners. This gave our team the chance to represent the United States at an international dairy cattle judging contest at Wye Kent England, where we placed second.*

Several of his stories focus on his days at the University, where Hughes majored in dairy production, minored in agricultural engineering, and graduated in 1937. In one of his stories, called "Starting at the University," Hughes writes about a neighbor boy who came to his house looking for lost gloves.

*He was thinking of going to the state fair on Wednesday to see about entering the University of Nebraska and getting a college education. Mother evidently got very interested and said I should go along with him and also try to get a college education.*

After getting his university degree,

Hughes spent his career as an extension agent in Kimball, Ogallala, and Fremont. He retired 34 years ago.

"That was a fine job for me. I loved it dearly," Hughes said.

Hughes attributes his university education with helping him learn about chemistry, insecticides, herbicides, and other matters that he needed in his jobs with extension.

"I'm certain I had value from the university because I knew something about chemistry and animal husbandry," he said.

Three decades into his retirement, Hughes decided to start his writing hobby. It was prompted by a story in "Nebraska-Land" magazine about a coyote hunt. It brought to Hughes' mind a coyote hunt he witnessed as a child. He wrote his own story.

"I read that story and said 'I know a bigger and better hunt by far,'" Hughes said. "My son-in-law said if you write it, he could type it."

Hughes said he plans to keep writing as long as he can with the ultimate goal of self-publishing his articles.

## Report says IANR Pays High Dividends to State

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources pays high dividends to the state of Nebraska, according to a study commissioned by IANR.

The "At Work for Nebraska" report released by the Battelle of Columbus, Ohio, reports that IANR returns at least \$15 in benefits to Nebraska citizens for every dollar of state support spent. As a result, the study calls IANR "a primary engine for economic and social sustainability."

IANR requested the Battelle study to learn the benefits of IANR's teaching, research, and extension education in Nebraska and provide guidance for future priorities.

"As our faculty and staff work to meet Nebraskans' needs today and in the future, it's important we take a critical look at our programs and activities and determine how effectively they're serving the state," said John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor.

The Nebraska Policy Institute recently reported that one-third of jobs in the state are agriculturally related, up from 25 percent in 1990. IANR, the report states, is "key to the long-term competitive sustainability

of Nebraska's high standard of living."

The "At Work" report credits the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources for preparing the workforce for Nebraska's economy, pointing out that historically about 70 percent of the college's graduates work in the state after graduation.

The report says the state's investment in IANR pays off many times over, at least 15 to 1. IANR received \$71.6 million in state funds in the 2005 fiscal year. In return, Nebraska taxpayers got more than \$750 million in improved economic output and savings, and about \$338 million in annual benefits through the economic ripple effects of IANR doing business in Nebraska.

"IANR has been, is, and will continue to be a primary engine for economic and social sustainability and growth in the State of Nebraska," the report said. "Based on the impact examples examined by Battelle, it is the conclusion of this study that the State of Nebraska is receiving an excellent return on its investment in IANR."

The report is available at <http://atworkfornebraska.unl.edu>.

## UNL OEA, KUDO Recipients

(continued from page 2)

Sam Shafer, Coordinator in the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture, received an OEA for January and February. A nominator wrote "Sam has a unique position with many different responsibilities pulling him in several directions at once. He handles this multitude of responsibilities with a high degree of professionalism."

James Margheim, Project Coordinator with the Panhandle Research and Extension Center, received an OEA for November and December 2006. A nominator wrote "Jim has many talents and performs a number of jobs beyond the normal field scope of plot work."

Alan Boldt, Research Engineer with the Department of Biological Systems Engineering, received an OEA for September and October 2006. A nominator wrote "Alan's work ethic is consistent and reli-



## Interest in Ag Journalism Major Increases

As the demand for agricultural journalists remains high, the number of students in the major at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is increasing.

Last fall, 24 students majored in agricultural journalism. That is three times the number from the previous year, said Dick Fleming, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication.

Fleming is happy to see the interest growing as the demand is high.

“We could place over 50 majors a year if we had them,” he said, adding “our goal is to have 50 majors in five years. I’m confident we’ll reach that goal before five years.”

UNL is responding to the increased interest. Last fall, for the first time since the 1920s, there was a full-time faculty member in ag journalism. Jason Ellis, Assistant Professor, who has a Ph.D. in agricultural education from Iowa State University, serves in that role.

Ellis said his goal is to increase the number of ag journalism majors and build recognition for the major. Ellis holds a dual bachelor’s degree in ag journalism and animal science from Kansas State University and a master’s degree in meat science from ISU.

Fleming recruited ag journalism students and advised those in advertising and news/editorial for the last 10 years. He also advised the UNL chapter of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, a national organization for students in ag journalism. Professor James Randall advised those in broadcasting.

Career options for ag journalism majors are varied, including newspaper and magazine writing and editing, advertising and marketing, public relations, radio or television reporting, education, and government or corporate communications.

“Careers in agricultural journalism continue to increase as more of the consumers are further removed from production agriculture along with stewardship of our natural resources,” said Steve Waller, Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Eric Brown, General Manager of KRVN, Nebraska’s premier agricultural radio station based in Lexington, said opportunities in agricultural journalism today are vast and “there aren’t that many people in the pipeline.”

The increased interest in the field is good news, Brown said.

“There are opportunities out there.”

– Lori McGinnis

## Veterinary Program Receives Accreditation

The new Professional Program in Veterinary Medicine offered by Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has received full accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association’s Council on Education.

The accreditation means program graduates will more easily get their veterinary licenses from whatever state they practice, said David Hardin, head of UNL’s Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences and the program’s associate dean.

Most states require graduation from a fully accredited veterinary program before granting a veterinary license, he said.

“It’s an important milestone to be fully accredited,” Hardin said.

Nebraskans participating in the program will attend UNL for two years then attend ISU for their final two years at in-state tuition rates. Twenty-five Nebraskans will begin the program this fall. The first class will move to ISU in 2009.

## UNL OEA, KUDO Recipients

(continued from page 3)

able: always there, always on time, always engaged.”

Jim Petersen, a Research Technologist at the West Central Research & Extension Center, received the OEA for July and August 2006. Supporters said Petersen led efforts at WCREC to organize storage of research and farm equipment and has “done the work equivalent of two technicians.”



### OEA for Office/Service Staff

Lanny “Fred” Keasling, Building Service Technician with the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, received an OEA for December 2006. A nominator wrote, “Fred is friendly and has a kind hello for everyone, but he doesn’t speak long because he is always on the go. If the mower won’t cut a small area of grass, he has a pair of scissors that will.”



## Dairy Store Celebrates 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

A new logo, new food products and a visitor’s center are some of the changes that are greeting visitors to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Dairy Store as it celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in April.

Changes were made to reflect the store’s anniversary and to help grow its profitability, said Rolando Flores, Head of the Department of Food Science and Technology.

“There is no doubt the Dairy Store is a landmark in Nebraska,” Flores said. “Some people cannot visit Lincoln without stopping at the Dairy Store.”

The store also has expanded its products by selling single-serve 10-ounce containers of ice cream at the Nebraska Unions, residence halls, and Nebraska athletic events.

Other new food products are being

offered at the dairy store, including new cheeses and build-your-own cheese boxes.

The Dairy Store is an important extension of Nebraska’s dairy industry and provides economic development opportunities for makers of food, Flores said.

Another new aspect to the dairy store is the visitor center, which occupies an area within the store.

Four large television monitors have been installed in the store. Equipment in the dairy plant has been upgraded. The store’s Web site, [www.dairystore.unl.edu](http://www.dairystore.unl.edu), has been revamped to reflect the store’s new offerings.

One external change is the renaming of the short road perpendicular to Holdrege Street that leads into the store. It is now called Dairy Store Drive.