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The Leading Object

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December 2007

## The Leading Object: December 2007

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## Perspectives

December. Already.

As 2008 knocks on the door, I'd encourage each of you to take a moment and recall IANR triumphs important to you this year, whether individual or collective, large or small, personal or professional.



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

IANR has a number of 2007 highlights. Among them:

We saw students graduate and launch careers. There were research discoveries, grants and contracts secured, awards presented to students, faculty and staff, workshops, seminars and field days statewide that took the resources of this great university to Nebraska residents, fulfilling our land-grant mission.

Release of the independent At Work for Nebraska study certainly was a 2007 IANR highlight. The study found IANR provides a conservative \$15 return for every state tax dollar invested with us.

Commissioned to provide knowledge for setting future priorities in our strategic planning, the study captured benefits IANR's research, teaching and extension education return to Nebraska.

In 1990 one in four Nebraska jobs depended in some way upon agriculture. Last year a report by the Nebraska Policy Institute told us that number now is one in three.

Agriculture's importance in Nebraska is increasing. IANR is Nebraska's primary provider of agricultural and natural resources programs, and an economic engine for our state.

I see the West Central Research and Extension Center's acquisition of 1,280 acres of western Nebraska farmland for research and extension education to help Nebraska's farmers and ranchers with limited water and irrigation practices, water saving irrigation and cropping demonstrations as another highlight.

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# 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.*



December 2007

## 'Know how, Know now' Seeks to Educate about Value of Extension

From managing livestock to saving money for college to preparing safe food — University of Nebraska—Lincoln teaches across the entire state.

Now extension is developing a message to educate more Nebraskans about its many diverse programs and their value.

That is why UNL Extension has unveiled a new theme called "Know how, Know now." By telling extension's story using this theme, extension hopes to educate more Nebraskans about the value of its programs.

"We felt like we needed to help people we work with understand the breadth and the depth of extension," said Extension Dean Elbert Dickey.

Many people know about extension when it comes to their particular area of familiarity, Dickey said. For example, those involved only in 4-H may be unfamiliar with extension's professional development work with crop consultants. Crop consultants may not realize the depth of extension's work in food and nutrition.

To spread the word, Keith Niemann, Director of Extension Human Resources, worked with a marketing company to develop tools to help tell extension's message to the public.

"People don't know the impact of extension. We need to change that," Niemann said.

One UNL Extension program that is very well-known is 4-H. Nebraska has the highest per-capita involvement of children in 4-H with more than 118,000 members. One in three eligible children in Nebraska are involved in 4-H, Niemann said.



Brett Hampton

**Magdalena Benton of Lincoln says University of Nebraska—Lincoln Extension has helped her learn more about preparing healthy meals for her family.**

New tools to describe extension's message include a DVD and a brochure. Both are available at extension offices statewide. The DVD will be played at extension education meetings and other suitable settings such as civic groups and club meetings, Niemann said.

The information is meant to relay to people that they have available to them research-based, unbiased information that matters to Nebraskans and can help them in a variety of aspects of their lives.

"After watching the DVD, we want people to say 'I didn't know that about extension,'" Niemann said.

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Last spring we dedicated the transformational expansion of the Panhandle Research Feedlot at Scottsbluff that provides 61 new pens with a uniform research environment.

In August approximately 500 people attended the wonderful celebration of our Haskell Agricultural Laboratory's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

CASNR led all UNL colleges in increasing undergraduate student enrollment this fall with an 11.7 percent increase, up 152 students. We began new undergraduate degree programs in forensic science and food technology for companion animals.

Our Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication received the university system's Department Teaching Award, which recognizes a department that has made a unique, significant contribution to teaching.

We experienced a first in the history of our state as 25 Nebraska students started their Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree studies on our campus. They'll study for

two years here, then take their last two years at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. This innovative, new professional program was granted full accreditation status by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association this year.

We saw the launch of ReTree Nebraska, with its goal of adding 1 million trees to the state in the next decade. Led by the Nebraska Forest Service and other IANR units, this new program will be critical to the future of our state's community forests.

The Dairy Store celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and opened a branch in the City Union.

Throughout Nebraska, extension education provided knowledge that contributes to bottom lines and better lives. County fairs, State Fair and Ak-Sar-Ben were among the many events highlighting knowledge and skills youth gain through 4-H.

Our Tractor Test Laboratory got a new track this summer, 22 feet wide and 9

inches thick. No taxpayer dollars were used in funding the project.

Our scientists unveiled the Biofuel Energy Systems Simulator, a tool to assess greenhouse gas mitigation and energy efficiency of corn-based ethanol plants, important to Nebraska.

I know these examples are only the tiniest tip of the IANR highlights iceberg, only a few of the many, many accomplishments people can name throughout the Institute. That's a highlight in itself!

I thank each of you for the many ways you have been at work for Nebraska in 2007. I look forward with great anticipation to an exciting, successful 2008.

Best wishes for the holidays, and a healthy, happy new year.



## Extension Guardianship Program Nationally Recognized

A guardianship program developed by University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension is proving its success, winning both national and state awards this fall.

The program, which provides guardianship and conservatorship training in 11 out of 12 Nebraska judicial districts, received a national award for complete curriculum from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in September.

It was recognized in October by UNL Extension with an Excellence in Team Programming Award.

The program was developed five years ago at the request of a York County judge, said Eileen Krumbach, Extension Educator based in York and state program coordinator. People who were appointed by county court to be a guardian or conservator for a ward had lacked necessary training, she said.

"What was available was a videotape,"

Krumbach said. "The Nebraska county court system had trouble getting people to fill out the forms in a timely fashion and knowing what forms to fill out."

Nebraska has about 2,000 court-appointed guardians and conservators each year, Krumbach said. Extension's guardianship program has trained about 1,500 people since the program was taken statewide two years ago.

The program is offered four times per year in 24 Nebraska counties and all judicial districts except in Douglas County, which has a separate training. The program consists of a three-hour class that addresses the guardian or conservator's responsibility to the court and the ward and other important issues. Most classes are co-taught by a volunteer attorney through the Nebraska State Bar Association, who answers general legal questions.

This program has been approved for use by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

## Know how. Know now. Seeks to Educate about Value of Extension (continued from page 1)

The DVD shows Nebraskans in a variety of settings explaining how extension education has helped them. For example, a teenage boy states "I know how to be responsible for raising an animal." A young woman says "I know how to save money for college." Young parents say "We know how to be better parents in every sense of the word." A farmer says "I know how to grow 200-bushel corn and use less water."

"Know how, Know now" will be more than a one-time DVD and brochure, Dickey said. Extension efforts will be ongoing to deliver its message about the breadth, depth, and impact of extension education.

– Lori McGinnis

**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.

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103 ACB, 0918; via e-mail (lmcginnis2@unl.edu) or via fax (402-472-0025).

## Alumnus Gets Degree 58 Years After Starting School

From the time Charles Messenger started pharmacy school until his graduation from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, nearly six decades had passed. But along the way, Messenger gained skills and knowledge that helped him with his course work; in turn, he said he uses something from every class he has taken.

Messenger, 75, of Dorchester, earned his diversified agricultural studies degree from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources – more than 58 years after he was called into active duty as a military reservist. He spent the next decade at the Nebraska Department of Roads as a lab technician, analyzing soils, asphalt, concrete, coal, and other road construction materials. After a brief stint as a mail clerk, Messenger spent 35 years at NU’s State Museum as collections manager at various times for most museum divisions. Eventually he became full-time collections manager for the entomology division, took field trips to Central America, and enjoyed taking classes at UNL.

One of his labs was in vertebrate paleontology and required he mount a saber tooth tiger with no visible means of sup-

port. He thought he would get help from his lab instructor, Karen, but she said she didn’t know anything about it either. They figured it out and later married. That display, and others they worked on, still stand in the museum.

The Messengers moved to an acreage, where Messenger took a few agricultural classes to learn more about the Red Angus cattle and hay he and Karen began raising.

The Lincoln native began studying mechanized agriculture. In one early class, each student received a box of parts for a 4-cycle engine. With no manual, students were to assemble and start their engines. If the engine started on the first pull, the student received an A. If it took two pulls to start, the student got a B. Messenger got an A.

Occasionally during his soils class laboratory, the instructor left Messenger in charge, because of his extensive knowledge, experience, and maturity.

Messenger said he decided to complete his degree when he retired from the state museum 12 years ago. With help from CASNR Dean Steve Waller, Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communica-

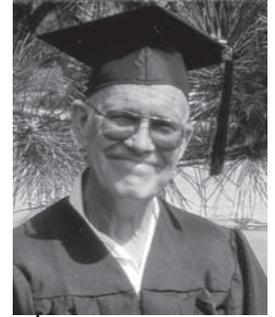
tion Professor Dann Husmann, and other “great people,” that happened in August.

“The Dean gets the credit for getting me through,” said Messenger, who reflected he uses knowledge from every class he has ever taken.

“I haven’t had a class yet I haven’t used,” he said.

Even in their retirement, the Messengers are a familiar sight on campus. They continue various projects, such as measuring tree inventories for carbon sequestration, and continue to learn. Karen, a 1965 graduate of the College of Agriculture, has her master’s degree in geology and is taking a class in herpetology, the study of snakes. Messenger is taking a class in anthropology lithics or stone tool production.

– Cheryl Alberts



Charles Messenger

## Dairy Store Busy Preparing Cheese and Gift Boxes

The end of the year brings a shifting of gears at University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Dairy Store.

The store is making more cheese than ice cream and is readying its gift boxes for holiday giving, said Courtney Wilson, retail manager. The store has mailed out a slick new gift box brochure and is taking orders for the packages that contain cheese, meat, and honey.

Last year the store sold 6,166 gift boxes, and the goal this year is to sell 20 percent more, Wilson said. The order forms were sent to faculty and staff as well as to past customers. The boxes are shipped nationwide.

“People like to support the university and this is one way to do it,” Wilson said.

To enhance its offerings, the Dairy Store expanded this fall by opening a second store at the Nebraska Union on City Campus. Single servings of the Dairy Store ice cream also were sold in the stands during Nebraska football games for the first time.

“People really like the Dairy Store, but not everyone can make it out here,” Wilson said, referring to the store’s historic location on East Campus.

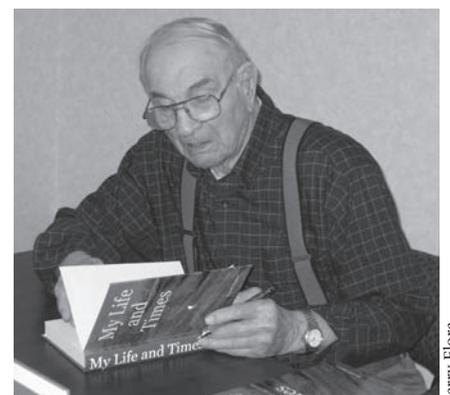
Sales at the City Campus store are going well, though the large number of other food outlets has posed a challenge, she said. Ice cream, however, remains a major attraction.

Ice cream is the store’s biggest seller throughout the year — except at the end of the year, Wilson said. That’s when more

focus is placed on cheese. Last year, the store sold 11,766 pounds of cheese. The most popular is Husker Cheese, a white cheese similar in flavor to Monterey Jack.

The Dairy Store offers 11 gift boxes, ranging from the \$9.95 Pioneer Box to the \$44.95 Sky Box. The new Build Your Own Box option allows buyers to choose any combination of items for a customized gift.

**University of Nebraska alumnus Russell Hughes, who started writing stories when he was 95, now has a self-published book called “My Life and Times.” The book is a collection of stories about Hughes’ life, including his time at the university. Hughes, 98, a 1937 graduate in dairy production, was featured in The Leading Object in April. He has donated a copy of his book to the CY Thompson Library on East Campus. His book is available at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).**



Jerry Flora

## Natural Resources, Plant Industries Halls Renamed

Two buildings on UNL's East Campus have new names.

Natural Resources Hall now is Forestry Hall and Plant Industries now is Entomology Hall. The name changes were approved in November by University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken.

John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor, requested the name changes to eliminate confusion on campus and better reflect the current uses of the building.

The Nebraska Forest Service now is the sole occupant of the former Natural Resources Hall. The School of Natural Resources now is housed at Hardin Hall.

The new name "will eliminate confusion

with the programs in Hardin Hall, the new home of the School of Natural Resources, while making it much easier for visitors to find the Forest Service," Owens said.

The Department of Entomology now is the only academic occupant of the former Plant Industries Building, which often has been confused with Plant Science Hall.

"At the beginning of each semester, new students are reported to be confused by the names Plant Industries and Plant Science Hall," Owens said. "Campus visitors also are confused by the current building names. The new name will eliminate that confusion while more accurately reflecting the current usage of the building."



## Dinsdale Award To Go to Three Assistant Professors

Three assistant professors in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources have been named to receive 2007 IANR Dinsdale Family Faculty Awards.

The three are Kathy Hanford in the Departments of Animal Science and Statistics, Amalia Yiannaka in the Department of Agricultural Economics, and Deana Namuth in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture.

The award is given for outstanding teaching, research, and outreach in IANR, specifically focusing on untenured faculty who have demonstrated commitment to academic excellence.

Nominators state Hanford has worked closely with the National Beef Cattle Consortium, which contributed to a large national study to find genomic markers for beef qual-



**Kathy Hanford**

ity traits such as marbling, tenderness and fat depth.

"The findings of this study will have a national and international impact on improving quality characteristics of meat products," nominators said. Hanford also works with many faculty and graduate students in CASNR, contributing as a statistician.

"The findings of this study will have a national and international impact on improving quality characteristics of meat products," nominators said.

Yiannaka's nominators state that she has developed a diverse research portfolio addressing current economic problems of national and international scope and of importance to Nebraska's agricultural and agri-food sectors.

"She has made significant contribu-



**Amalia Yiannaka**

tions to the study of the market and welfare effects of genetically modified food products, mandatory country of origin labeling, the livestock mandatory reporting act, genetic use restriction technologies, and the effect of Wal-Mart on the economic growth of Nebraska counties, to name a few," a nominator wrote.

Namuth's nominators state she has been instrumental in introducing distance education in the department and making it a seamless part of instruction.

"Her contribution to Nebraska's outreach capacity in biotechnology and plant breeding is key as the state sees unprecedented growth in this important agriculture industry," a nominator wrote.

The Dinsdale awards will be presented during a luncheon on April 21.



**Deana Namuth**

## Hart, Baxendale Receive Awards

Jeff Hart, Extension Educator for Special Projects, and Fred Baxendale, Professor and Extension Entomologist, each received awards at the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) annual meeting in New York this month.

Hart received the 2007 National Award for Diversity, which is presented for outstanding efforts and accomplishments in achieving and sustaining diversity and pluralism in Cooperative Extension.

Baxendale received the 2007 North Central Regional Excellence in Extension Award, which recognizes extension professionals who excel at extension programming, make a positive impact on constituents, and provide visionary leadership for the system.