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Perspectives

The beginning of each New Year often directs our focus to the future.

I look to Nebraska's and IANR's future in 2008 and beyond with real hope and enthusiasm, seeing the two as closely intertwined.

As Nebraska's primary provider of agricultural and natural resources programs, IANR's work is critical to Nebraska's future. We are a key economic engine for our state. Agriculture is Nebraska's leading industry, and I expect its importance here will only grow.

It already has. In 1990, one in four Nebraskans depended upon agriculture in some way for their livelihoods. Now it's one in three, according to a 2006 Nebraska Policy Institute study.

Smart people build on their strengths, and agriculture definitely is a strength for Nebraska. Some naturals for growing our state's economy include the biosciences and value-added products for Nebraska's agricultural commodities. IANR will provide new knowledge and education to help lead the way in both these areas.

When I look to Nebraska's future, I envision a state where thoughtful citizens are dedicated to sustaining and preserving the natural resources that clearly are the base of Nebraska's wealth. I see a state in which individuals, families and communities of all sizes will have multiple opportunities to thrive.

Our research and education are vital to Nebraska's future.

IANR's blueprint to the future is our strategic plan, based on issues identified by Nebraskans, and informed through

continued on page 2



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

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.*



January 2008

Extension works with NACO to Improve County Government Leadership

Buffalo Bill Cody helped members of the Nebraska Association of County Officials see that there has been a lot of changes in county government through the years.

Buffalo Bill, portrayed by an actor, was a character in a mock trial put on at NACO's conference in December, where University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension unveiled a new leadership program for county officials.

The NACO Institute of Excellence training will begin in February for elected county commissioners and supervisors, said Phyllis Schoenholz, Extension Educator based in Hebron. The leadership program will help participants learn to develop listening and communication skills, better use technology, conduct business more efficiently, and increase the tax base through economic development.

The conference opened with a mock trial featuring Buffalo Bill as an old-time county official dealing with 21st century challenges. The skit was designed to make the point that county government has changed through the years and county officials need to change with it.

Schoenholz and Carroll Welte, Extension Educator based in Tekamah, began working with NACO Executive Director Larry Dix two years ago to start the institute. NACO has welcomed extension's involvement.



Carroll Welte, Extension Educator based in Tekamah, staffs the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension booth at the NACO conference in December.

"UNL Extension has been great to work with. It has been a very successful partnership," said Jon Edwards, NACO assistant legal counsel who has been working with extension on the project.

Seeking and not finding a national assessment tool on county official training needs, extension collaborated with UNL Center for Applied Rural Innovation to create a statewide survey. More than 500 survey responses indicated that county officials determined more leadership training is needed, especially in a more technological, ever-changing workplace, Schoenholz said.

Extension faculty met with faculty from University of Nebraska at Omaha's College of Public Administration and University of Nebraska at Kearney to develop topics relating to leadership, policy, public service, economic development, and

continued on page 2

Perspectives continued from page 1

multiple listening sessions held yearly throughout our state.

The three program themes of our strategic plan are improving natural resources management and promoting environmental quality; enhancing economically viable and sustainable food and biomass systems; and strengthening the quality of life of individuals and families and contributing to community viability.

We're going to lead in generating and delivering knowledge to sustain and grow our state in a wide variety of ways, from the biosciences to yield increases to food safety to water quantity and quality to value-added products to entrepreneurial youth and adults.

It's why we're here.

With agriculture Nebraska's leading industry, we must and will cultivate and provide the cutting-edge research, teaching, and extension education programs that are absolutely vital to the industry that supports and leads Nebraska's economy, and greatly influences the good life of Nebraskans.

We're going to go right on being at work for Nebraska, doing all we can, as we have since our inception, to help make ours the best university in the country in terms of serving the interests of the people of our state – a goal often stated by President J.B. Milliken.

And we'll do that working with our partners in all 93 counties. We in IANR are partners with Nebraska, and we take our partnerships very seriously.

Certainly an important part of my vision is providing a high-quality education for a continually expanding number of students — education that leads to lucrative, fulfilling, much-needed careers. I expect to see enrollment in our traditional agricultural degree programs — animal science, agronomy and horticulture, agricultural economics — grow and grow significantly.

I expect IANR constantly will assess how we can expand and improve what we do well for Nebraska — and as the independent "At Work" study pointed out, we do a number of things *extremely* well.

I cannot think of a vision for the state's future without thinking of the exciting new initiatives at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, including infusing entrepreneurship principles throughout NCTA's curriculum and providing opportunities for NCTA graduates who want to own livestock and be part of the revitalization of rural Nebraska through the innovative 100 cow program.

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources truly is at work for Nebraska. This year we'll continue our conversations — with decision makers, constituents, and certainly with each other — about the many ways we do that, and the value it provides our state.



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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Extension works with NACO to Improve County Government Leadership

(continued from page 1)

management. Those topics and more will be addressed in yearlong training workshops and will cumulate in a graduation ceremony at the 2008 NACO Conference.

UNO faculty are integral partners in developing plans for the 2008 institute schedule of face-to-face leadership workshops as well as online resources between the sessions, Schoenholz said.

Each county will be asked to send one elected board member to the institute training, Schoenholz said. Though not expecting all counties to participate, "if we could get 70 percent we would be thrilled," she said.

To bring the "best of the best" in leadership education to Nebraska, Welte and Schoenholz initiated two national video/audio conversations with faculty of 13 other land-grant universities to share information and educational resources regarding public official education.

The first year will be a pilot for county commissioners and supervisors, with the intent to later expand the offering to more county officials later, Schoenholz said.

— Lori McGinnis

ACE Communicator Award Given to Evertson

Justin Evertson, Assistant Director for community programs at the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, has been named 2007 Communicator of the Year.



Justin Evertson

The award is given by the Nebraska chapter of the Association of Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences.

Evertson works with at least 50 different communities across the state annually on landscape projects involving parks, schools, libraries, fairgrounds, courthouses, nursing homes, and business districts.

Livestock Judging Led Hamilton to UNL and Impacted Life After Graduation

An interest in 4-H livestock judging encouraged David Hamilton to enroll in the University of Nebraska's College of Agriculture.

Hamilton, a Sandhills rancher, knew from the time he entered high school he wanted to go to UNL and focus on two primary areas of study.

"First, while participating in 4-H livestock projects as a youth and competing in livestock evaluation contests I gained a keen interest in the ability to critically evaluate beef cattle both on a live basis and on a carcass basis," he said.

That desire led him to enroll in UNL and compete on the intercollegiate livestock judging team for two years.

Secondly, Hamilton's interests in attending UNL were piqued watching his father working "in the art and science of proper management and utilization of range land and pasture."

As a result, Hamilton majored in animal science with an option in range management.

While earning his bachelor's degree,

Hamilton competed on the Jr. and Sr. Livestock Judging Teams — college experience that he says he values the most. He says his coaches, teammates and the people who furnished livestock for the teams to practice with while training for judging contests have continued to impact him.

Also, critically evaluating beef cattle, placing a class of animals and then defending that placing with oral reasons was the best training he said he received not only for making decisions on beef cattle selection but for making critical decisions in all aspects of his life.

After earning his bachelor's degree in 1974, Hamilton returned to the family ranch business 12 miles north of Thedford, where he is part owner and full-time manager. He is the fourth generation to manage the family ranch.

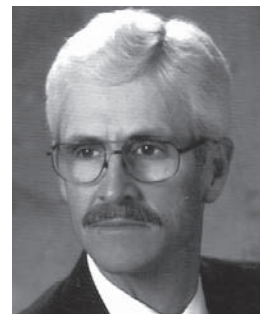
Hamilton and his wife Loretta have grown their beef cow business fourfold and their land base threefold. The pasture management system has grown from a three-pasture rotation to a 10-pasture rotation, necessitating the need to develop

many miles of fencing and water pipelines to successfully manage it, he said.

The family's breeding program has evolved from a two-breed rotation to rotating two hybrids involving four breeds, he said. The Hamiltons have developed enough pivot irrigated acres to produce protein to supply the needs of the cow herd and the weaned and backgrounded calves.

"My education at UNL impacted my life by preparing me to successfully interact with people, by making thoughtful, insightful decisions that lead to life's successes, by recognizing that change is constant and more recently, that the rate of change is increasing," Hamilton said. "It helped me realize that education wouldn't end with college graduation."

— Lori McGinnis



David Hamilton

Koelsch Named Assistant Dean of Extension

Rick Koelsch, livestock environmental engineer for the Departments of Biological Systems Engineering and Animal Science, has assumed the position of Assistant Dean of University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension.

Koelsch succeeds DeLynn Hay, who retired in December.

Koelsch's emphasis will be on extension program leadership for agriculture and natural resources. A member of the extension faculty since 1995, this past year he served as extension's administrative intern, increasing his knowledge of extension administration.

Known nationally for his work, Koelsch's extension programming targets development and implementation of a Nutrient Management Planning program to help Nebraska producers with regulatory expectations, said Extension Dean Elbert Dickey. Koelsch also facilitates a Livestock Environmental Issues committee to ensure open dialogue between UNL faculty and stakeholders.

Koelsch provides both national and regional leadership for livestock environmental issues, Dickey said. He is co-leader for a regional Heartland animal manure management team that delivers joint educational programs for regulatory, agency, and private sector advisers.

He also co-leads a national Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center that hosts a monthly Webcast presented by national experts targeting those who advise animal producers on environmental issues.

Koelsch received the 2006 American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers' Presidential Citation and the ASABE's Standards Development Award, as well as the 2006 National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges' Excellence in Extension Regional Award.

"I look forward to working with faculty to facilitate quality extension education programs targeting priority issues for Nebraska," Koelsch said. "I will emphasize our action team process for defining statewide extension priorities. In addition, emerging Web technologies will play an important role in extension program delivery. I will encourage UNL Extension to provide regional and national leadership for utilizing and evaluating these technologies."



Rick Koelsch

Grants to Help Forest Service Reduce Wildfire Risk

The Nebraska Forest Service at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has received more than \$1 million from the U.S. Forest Service for community forest restoration in Omaha and Lincoln and for efforts to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

The money comes in the form of grants that the IANR unit competed for with 17 other western state forestry agencies, said Scott Josiah, state forester and director of the forest service.

The service got \$300,000 each for work in the Niobrara Valley in north central Nebraska and the Pine Ridge region in northwest Nebraska. It also received \$150,000 for ReTree Nebraska, an initiative to raise public awareness about trees and plant 1 million trees in 10 years.

The Nebraska Forest Service – a part of IANR – applied for the three grants, not expecting to get all of them.

“We were very surprised to find out all three were funded,” Josiah said.

The work at Niobrara Valley and Pine Ridge consists of a comprehensive program approach to reduce fire danger through enhanced fire prevention, planning, and building the capacity of volunteer fire districts to suppress wildfires. The grant also will pay for intensive geospatial mapping to identify areas of over-

grown forest where fires could start and spread upward into the canopies of trees, said Becky Erdkamp, education and outreach specialist at the forest service.

The ReTree Nebraska funds will be used to restore and revitalize the community forests in Omaha and Lincoln and educate residents about the value of trees, Erdkamp said.

In addition to the \$750,000, the Nebraska Forest Service received a separate \$500,000 U.S. Forest Service grant to reduce the density of trees in the Niobrara Valley and Pine Ridge in order to reduce the risk of wildfires.

These funds pay for clearing out small trees and brush, sometimes called “ladder fuels” because they provide a pathway for fire to spread from the forest floor into the forest canopy, in areas more prone to severe forest fires, Erdkamp said.

The \$500,000 will be combined with \$237,000 in state funds and \$250,000 in landowner contributions to make it nearly a \$1 million project, Josiah said.

“These funds will really help us address the pressing needs across the state and implement and expand critically important programs,” Josiah said.

– Lori McGinnis

Behl, Clang Receive OEA Recognition

Outstanding Employee Awards have been given to Terri Behl and Loyal Clang.

Clang, agricultural research technician with the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, received the OEA for office/service staff for December.

Nominators said of him: “One of Loyal’s strongest qualities is his willingness to help new or younger people learn to become better employees” and “His attention to detail and protocol make his data collection some of the best at USMARC.”



Loyal Clang

Behl, staff secretary in the Department of Animal Science, received the OEA for office/service staff for January.

Nominators said of her: “She is always willing to step outside the boundaries of her job description to make sure that the event or project will be a success” and she is “deeply committed to both the faculty and students in the department and wants everyone and everything that happens here to be a success.”

Clang and Behl receive a cash award of \$350, a certificate, and a lapel pin.



Terri Behl

ZB Mayo Gets NEOPA Honor

ZB Mayo, interim associate dean and director of the Agricultural Research Division, has been named 2007-2008 Nebraska Educational Administrator of the year by the Nebraska Educational Office Professionals Association.

Mayo has been a faculty member and administrator at UNL for 35 years.

Nominators said Mayo has amazing energy and enthusiasm for his job and a natural leader. “He inspires others to always do their best,” they said.



ZB Mayo

Renovation Work to Begin on Two East Campus Buildings

Work will begin this year on two East Campus buildings badly in need of renovation, said Barry Shull, IANR Facilities Director.

The most noticeable work will be on Keim Hall, which will be shut down completely, probably starting in June, for 1½ years, he said. The building will be gutted and remodeled. The mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will all be replaced.

“It’s really a pristine building and the

outside will remain the same, but once you enter the front doors you won’t recognize it as the same building,” Shull said.

The Animal Science Complex will have its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems replaced, which is to improve odor control and animal care. Also to be done is new roofing work. The project will be done in phases and is expected to be completed by 2010.

The life expectancy of an HVAC system

typically is 30 to 35 years, which is the age of the newest system in Animal Science, Shull said. While some the systems are still in fair shape, regulations concerning animal care have become more stringent through the years, requiring increased ventilation. The HVAC system at Keim is about 55 years old.

The funding for the work – \$14 million for Keim and \$21.1 million for Animal Science, was approved by the 2006 Legislature.