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## A model for innovation: Project will bring makerspace to Sidney [Nebraska]

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# A model for innovation: Project will bring makerspace to Sidney



A new project led by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will establish an Innovation Makerspace Co-Laboratory in Sidney, with the goal of building a network of makerspaces around the state in small towns and places they wouldn't normally exist.

The space will help advance an experimental model of interdisciplinary learning, educational connectedness and social innovation focused on rapid prototyping and making. A makerspace is a site that provides hands-on, creative ways to encourage students to design, experiment, build and invent as they engage in science and engineering.

The project is expected to reach more than 75 youth and adults. The makerspace will allow experts from **Nebraska Innovation Studio** (<http://innovationstudio.unl.edu/nebraska-innovation-studio>), **Nebraska Extension** (<http://extension.unl.edu>) and other potential partners to provide youth and adults with hands-on opportunities in electronics, textiles, computers, digital media creation, music technology and digital fabrication.

"Engaging and involving community members with the makerspace will build capacity and network local experts and resources to our young people while they learn new skills, create

and innovate with the possibility of entrepreneurial start-ups," said Connie Hancock, community vitality extension educator.

The project is funded by a two-year, \$300,000 National Science Foundation-funded Early-concept Grant for Exploratory Research.

"We are interested in supporting youth and adult makers by creating a permanent site at the Sidney Public Library," said Brad Barker, professor and 4-H youth development specialist who is leading the project. "Moreover, we are looking at ways to link Nebraska Innovation Studio with the Sidney site using technology like telepresence robotics and immersive 3-D learning environments."

Nebraska Innovation Studio will support the makerspace via innovative technology. The makerspace on [Nebraska Innovation Campus](http://innovationstudio.unl.edu/nebraska-innovation-studio) (<http://innovationstudio.unl.edu/nebraska-innovation-studio>) opened in 2015. Projects there include art, woodwork, 3-D printing and furniture. Several startup companies have used the 3-D printer and molds to support their businesses. Established local businesses such as The Mill have used the studio to create ceramic plates, planters and other items.

"We want to find ways to integrate this technology into our 4-H program and into classrooms throughout the county in addition to reaching an adult audience," said Cynthia Gill, 4-H extension educator for Cheyenne County.

Other collaborators include faculty from the Nebraska Extension office in Cheyenne County; Neal Grandgenett, the Dr. George and Sally Haddix Community Chair of STEM Education in the College of Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha; Shane Farritor, professor of engineering at Nebraska and director of Nebraska Innovation Studio; Jennifer Keshwani, assistant professor and science literacy specialist at Nebraska; JoAnn McManus, grants coordinator/federal aid administrator for the Nebraska Library Commission; John F. Cabra, senior personnel and associate professor at the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College; Dagen Valentine, Nebraska Extension educator; and Craig Lefteroff, technology innovation librarian at the Nebraska Library Commission.

For more information on Nebraska makerspaces and locations, [click here](#)

(<http://innovationstudio.unl.edu/nebraska-makerspaces>).

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## Source

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