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Perspectives

It was one of those absolutely picture postcard fall days when we cut the ribbon at the Kimmel Education and Research Center in Nebraska City November 1.

The sky was blue, the temperature near 70, and a breeze stirred the leaves on the autumn-painted trees. It was a perfect afternoon to celebrate as we gathered at Kimmel Orchard to officially cut the ribbon on the new, nearly 10,000 square foot center.

Here in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources we often note that we are partners with Nebraska. This new center is a wonderful example of a dynamic partnership between Nebraska's land-grant university, a national foundation, and a very special local private philanthropic foundation.

The local private philanthropic foundation is the Richard P. and Laurine Kimmel Charitable Foundation Inc. The national foundation is the National Arbor Day Foundation. We are the third side of that triangle.

The private Kimmel Foundation owns and provides the operational expenses for the beautiful new building where University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension will offer educational programming, and our scientists will conduct research. There's a large classroom for educational programs, viticulture and specialty forest crop laboratories, and office space for use by our personnel.

While the building was just recently completed, joint educational programming and research involving the university, the Kimmel Foundation and the National Arbor Day Foundation has been under way at the Kimmel Orchard for several years.

Educational programs offered through the center focus primarily on agritourism, viticulture, specialty forest products,

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

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*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.*

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IANR

November/December 2005

Drought Mitigation Center Seeks to Enhance Decision-Making Tools

Giving agricultural producers better decision-making tools is the goal of a new endeavor by IANR-based National Drought Mitigation Center.

The center has partnered with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Department of Computer Science and Engineering and the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) on a \$6.4 million effort to bring cutting-edge computer science technologies to producers nationwide.

"If we can provide better information on current climate and soil moisture conditions at a local level, that will help farmers make better decisions on what crops to plant, tillage, and better fertilization practices," said Don Wilhite, center Director and Professor in the School of Natural Resources. "Understanding and evaluating risk at critical times before and during the growing season will help mitigate some of the impacts associated with drought."

In addition to the \$6.4 million agreement, the mitigation center received a \$1 million award from RMA to further enhance an existing Web-based tool that uses satellite data and climate information to detect the scope and potential impact of drought on rangeland conditions.

The new agreements will allow for enhancement of existing drought mitigation tools like the U.S. Drought Monitor map and the Drought Impact Reporter, Wilhite said.

"This will help ag producers, NRDs, and water managers. We're trying to provide better decision support tools so they can evaluate their situation better and make better decisions," he said.



Brett Hampton

Don Wilhite unveils details of the National Drought Mitigation Center's work to enhance tools to help agricultural producers address drought.

"Agriculture is a very climate-sensitive business. These new tools will provide timely and reliable information that can be coupled with the historical experience farmers already have," he said.

New tools created in recent years by the center and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering have helped bring a scientific basis to predicting and evaluating drought conditions, Wilhite said. The enhancement of the tools and the creation of new tools will bring more improvement, he said.

The center will hold workshops and listening sessions throughout the country over the next three years to learn more about the information needs of agricultural producers and train them on the use of the tools as they are created, Wilhite said. The center will work closely with UNL Extension on this process, he said.

and sustainable agriculture. Projects emphasize developing value-added products and markets for Nebraska and the region, as well as land stewardship.

Even before the building was built, our faculty, staff, and students had test plots for grapes, as well as marketable woody plants at the orchard. Educational field days and programs draw a number of people. The Fruits and Nuts Jam drew approximately 1,800 attendees earlier this fall.

Ernie Weyeneth, my friend and Kimmel Foundation President, has said he sees this partnership as "a marvelous opportunity to provide demonstrations and educational opportunities for producers and others in a natural setting."

I agree.

Ernie also enjoys pointing out that the university has been a part of the orchard from the beginning, as Ernest Hoppert, an extension horticulture specialist, helped Mr. Kimmel plant the original orchard.

We have a long, proud, and enduring history as Nebraska's partner.

In my remarks at the ribbon cutting that beautiful first day of November, I spoke of the dedicated and wonderfully insightful vision the late Mr. and Mrs. Kimmel had when they established the Richard P. and Laurine Kimmel Charitable Foundation. Through it they continue their deep and enduring commitment to agricultural education and research, and their many years of civic charity and leadership.

The Foundation they established contributes, as they did throughout their lives, to their community, region, and state by enhancing the quality of life through education, arts, agriculture, humanities, and human services.

It has been my observation over the years that philanthropy is key in making the difference between a good university and a great university. I also think vision is key to philanthropy.

How fortunate we are, here in Nebraska, to have people whose vision is developed looking out over vast horizons to focus on what's important far, far down the road.

How important it is to be partners with Nebraska.



Cartwright Receives November OEA

Carol Cartwright, Business Manager for the Natural Resource Business Center, has been selected to receive IANR's Outstanding Employee Award for Managerial/Professional Staff for November and December.



Cartwright

Supporters wrote that the business center "has flourished under her leadership." Another says, "She is very efficient and leads the NRBC team in an exemplary manner." Another says, "Carol exhibits an exceptional combination of professional competence, service attitude, work ethic, relational skills, and leadership skills."

UNL for Families wins 4-H Award

The UNL for Families program was awarded the first 4-H Families Count: Family Strengthening Award at the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents banquet in Seattle in November.

The award, sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is given to five 4-H youth development programs nationwide for work that improves life for rural disadvantaged families.

The UNL for Families is the work of three action teams: 4-H Youth Development, Building Strong Families, and Nutrition Health and Food Safety.

Birnstihl Named Acting Extension Dean

Beth Birnstihl will serve as Acting Dean of University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension during Dean Elbert Dickey's two-year appointment at the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service in Washington, D.C.

Birnstihl will have full signature authority and be in the office while Dickey is in Washington. They will communicate daily via e-mail and Dickey said he will have input into all major decisions.

Pork Producers Start Haskell Swine Professorship

The Nebraska Pork Producers Association donated \$25,000 in November to IANR toward a swine management faculty professorship at the Haskell Agricultural Laboratory in Concord.

The gift starts a fund-raising drive to generate \$250,000 for the Haskell Agricultural Laboratory Swine Professorship.

Rod Johnson, NPPA Executive Director, said the organization saw an opportunity to support a faculty position at the lab.

"The position at the Haskell Ag Lab has been a very influential and important one at the producer level," Johnson said.

**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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Robertson Credits CASNR for Career Success

Rob Robertson knew that combining agriculture with economics would be a good place to start his career. His degree in agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has carried him far.

Robertson is Vice President of Governmental Relations for the Nebraska Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization. He lobbies state and federal governmental officials and helps push and write legislation to benefit Nebraska farmers.

"I owe a great deal of my career success to the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and the University for giving me the communication skills necessary to work with people and lawmakers," he said.

Robertson grew up on a farm near Roca south of Lincoln. He attended UNL to support his home university and decided on agriculture economics.

"There was little reason to look elsewhere than UNL's College of Agriculture when wanting an education in the ag or

natural resource arenas," he said. "I liked business and I liked agriculture, so ag econ seemed to make sense."

He graduated in 1985 with his bachelor of science degree. He earned a master's degree in business administration in 1994 from UNL.

He particularly remembers the friends he made and people he met at UNL who represented agricultural interests from across Nebraska.

"My university experience gave me a broad look at life and people," he said. "It taught me to have a perception that there are other people out there who view things differently. It gave me a worldly perspective."

Robertson said his CASNR classes helped build a framework for his career. Many times he has encountered a situation at work that resurrected helpful memories of a related classroom experience.

His work life started after graduation, when he joined the Washington, D.C.,

staff of then-Representative Doug Bereuter. Robertson served three years as agricultural legislative assistant, crafting legislation to benefit Nebraska farmers. He then moved to Lincoln and became Bereuter's district office manager for two years.

Afterward, he joined Farm Bureau part time and farmed with his father and brother back home. His current full-time position started 15 years ago. He lobbies on behalf of agriculture and natural resources.

"Farm Bureau is a real solid organization and a voice of reason for farmers and ranchers," he said. "It's what I call a perfect job."



Robertson

Salute to Graduates Provides Personal Touch

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources plans to give its graduates a more personal touch.

Starting with this December's graduation, CASNR is unveiling its Salute to Graduates.

"It's a ceremony for CASNR graduating seniors right here on campus in the Great Plains Room at the Nebraska East Union," said Paul Horton, CASNR's Alumni Development Coordinator.

The ceremony, to be held 4 p.m. December 16, the day before UNL's commencement at the Devaney Sports Center, will allow the approximately 90 graduating seniors an opportunity to share their accomplishments with family, friends, and CASNR faculty, Horton said.

Participating graduates will be asked to write a few sentences sharing their accomplishments, future plans, and any person they want to recognize, Horton said. The graduates will have an opportunity to stand while their words are read.

"It's a ceremony to acknowledge each graduate individually. The graduate will stand up in front with the dean," Horton said.

"Salute to Graduates is a special ceremony

to honor our graduates, celebrate their accomplishments and share their future plans with those in attendance," Dean Steve Waller said in an announcement to CASNR faculty.

There is no charge to attend, and graduates will not wear caps and gowns to the Salute. Some CASNR departments may plan separate receptions prior to the Salute ceremony.

CASNR mailed official invitations to the ceremony to the parents of graduates, encouraging them to come to Lincoln a day before the UNL commencement for the Salute, Horton said. The CASNR Alumni Association

plans a breakfast for graduates and their families the morning of the UNL commencement.

CASNR plans to host the Salute to Graduates before every spring and winter graduation ceremony, Horton said.

"I am delighted that Dean Waller and the CASNR staff embraced this special ceremony and look forward to the event becoming a campus tradition important not only to the new graduates and their families, but also to IANR faculty and staff," said John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR.

Kimmel Center Dedication



Brett Hampton

A ribbon-cutting celebration was held November 1 for the new Kimmel Education and Research Center in Nebraska City. The center is a joint effort of the Kimmel Foundation and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. The foundation funded building construction and UNL Extension is providing educational programming.

As Nebraska's Needs Changed, So Has Extension

(This article was written by Rod Gangwish of Shelton in response to a Kearney Hub editorial and was published in the October 22-23 edition of the Hub. It is republished here with the permission of the Hub. Gangwish is a Nebraska delegate of the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET).)

In a recent editorial, the Hub wrote about the needs of rural Nebraska and questioned how the University of Nebraska at Kearney might help meet those needs. As a Nebraska farmer who has lived here all my life, I appreciate your recognition of rural Nebraska's challenges.

I also have some thoughts on the comments you made about University of Nebraska—Lincoln Extension when you wrote that, historically, "the university system has been a catalyst for economic prosperity across the state. The extension service and, more recently, the campus-based development centers have been resources for communities seeking to innovate and grow. But time and the accelerating demographic changes seem to be passing those resources by ..."

As a member of the Buffalo County Extension Board and a past 4-H leader, I am very aware of the leadership roles the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UNL, and Extension, which is part of the Institute, play in helping meet rural Nebraska's needs. I know they are doing a great deal for rural economic development, and wanted to share some of that with you.

Agriculture is our state's leading industry. Extension has a long, proud history of working with agriculture to see that producers have knowledge of the best practices available that allow us to be as efficient and effective as possible in our production and stewardship. Yet that's just part of

what Extension does. As Nebraska's needs changed, so has Extension.

Today you'll find Extension Educators providing Nebraska's small business with education to help compete through e-commerce. With the advent of the Internet, businesses with products people want can be located anywhere – including rural Nebraska.

I know Extension Educators have taken leadership roles and helped bring people together to establish businesses in rural communities throughout Nebraska, ranging from ethanol plants to a birdseed plant to a collection and grading plant for Frito Lay.

Plants mean jobs, and these plants are a market for locally grown crops. Extension education and legwork help communities find economic prosperity opportunities they did not know they had.

Extension collaborates with many people, agencies, and organizations throughout Nebraska to help provide programs of concrete benefit to our state. That's as it should be – there isn't any one-and-only provider that can do it all when the need is as great as it is for economic development in our state. Sometimes, however, I think Extension is such a good partner, so focused on the need, that Extension doesn't toot its own horn enough about all it's doing, and people don't realize what a leadership role and effect it has on economic development in Nebraska.

For example, Extension's EDGE – Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs – program partners with communities and businesses. Many people may not associate EDGE with Extension or the University. Yet I discovered from an Extension newsletter that more than 2,000 people have participated in EDGE education since the program began in 1993.

The story said when Extension surveyed past participants, it found 71 percent of those responding increased their sales. Fifty-five percent increased the types of products and services sold, and at least 90 percent said they'd increased business skills, self-confidence, dedication, and networking.

Another newsletter story told of how Extension, partnering with the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative, is offering Red Carpet Service hospitality education in Nebraska towns to help those who work with tourists make a good impression for the town and provide helpful tourist information.

The Rural Initiative is a universitywide program working with people, communities, and organizations for economic opportunity and quality of life in rural Nebraska. It often collaborates with Extension, agencies, and others. Together they have collaborated to provide a full-time community and economic development educator based in Kearney who works with businesses on consumer preference studies to help businesses and communities improve their local economy.

You're right when you say work is needed to help rural Nebraska communities survive and thrive. Work is under way, and more needs to be done.

In these times of limited resources, I think we need to look to collaboration and strong partnerships and avoid duplication of efforts. Extension has years of experience in meeting the needs of our state. There is no need to reinvent the wheel when the wheel is already invented and working. The real need is to foster an environment of working together and to grow proven programs already in place, as necessary, for the good of Nebraska.

Hahn named Nebraska's Fourth CARET Delegate

Richard Hahn of Omaha, retired President and CEO of Farmers National Company, has been appointed as a Nebraska delegate to the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET).

Hahn becomes Nebraska's fourth delegate to CARET, joining Sallie Atkins of Halsey, Mark Gustafson of Mead, and Rod Gangwish of Shelton.

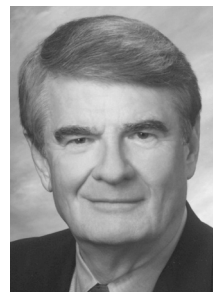
"I'm very interested in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources," Hahn said. "I want to help the land-grant colleges, which play an extremely important role in teaching and research and contributing to the success of agriculture."

CARET, created in 1982, supports the land-grant university system of research, teaching, and extension education programs in Washington.

"Richard Hahn will be a tremendously effective CARET delegate," said John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR. "He brings to the national policy level the perspective of the Omaha business community, coupled with a wealth of experience and knowledge about rural issues in our state and beyond. The Nebraska CARET delegation will be especially persuasive about the needs of the University and

its constituents when it communicates with decision makers at all levels."

Hahn has a bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. He was President and CEO of Farmers National from 1987 until his retirement in January. Prior to that, he spent 23 years at Metropolitan Life Agriculture Investments.



Hahn