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# 10 years after fair move, UNL grows dynamic Innovation Campus

by Steven White  
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Nebraska Innovation Campus (NTV News)

Back at the old State Fair Park in Lincoln, the same grounds where kids once showed have changed, but it's still about agriculture - solving global challenges related to food and water.

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"To see this build out here is really pretty cool," Black said of his lab.

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*Nebraska Innovation Campus*

Pretty cool indeed, as the Nebraska Innovation Campus takes shape.

"This whole idea of taking the state fairgrounds and retrofitting," Black said.

It was an idea Black heard about when he was being recruited to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

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*Dan Duncan of Nebraska Innovation Campus (NTV News)*

While it excited academics, many grumbled about the move. In retrospect, the head of the Nebraska Innovation Campus says everyone's a winner.

NIC Executive Director Dan Duncan said, "Everybody agrees we have a great State Fair now, we have 455,000 square feet, we're generating \$6-7 million a year in tax revenue for the state off Nebraska Innovation Campus, our companies are generating a lot of investment."

Duncan said it was important to honor the legacy of the State Fair.

"Being able to save the walls of the old industrial arts building, really the oldest building out here is really made that facility unique," Duncan said.



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*Nebraska Innovation Campus*

The old 4-H building is now a state of the art conference center. The campus is a public-private partnership, set up as a non-profit by the Board of Regents.

The idea is to harness the talent on campus by helping faculty and students create new companies.

"Really what we're about is creating that environment, which is much more likely to happen and flourish," Duncan said.

They try to create chance encounters that might inspire new ideas, along with shared spaces to prototype and build.

"If you can give them more and more tools, they understand how to use those and they are so creative they'll do things no one could have thought would really happen," Duncan said.

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[Search Site](#)*Nebraska Innovation Campus (NTV News)*

The University licenses research to faculty through NU Tech Ventures, connecting researchers with industry, and that appears to potential faculty.

Dr. Paul Black said, "Our ability to recruit faculty is predicated on the fact that we're going to have huge impacts on the state, part of that is foundational research and part is that we do things outside of the box."

"It's still all about bringing people together to do very interesting things," Duncan said.

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