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## Governor Signs Budget with Investment in Ag Innovation Facility

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# Governor signs budget with investment in ag innovation facility

Gov. Pete Ricketts on April 4 signed a mid-biennium budget package for the state that makes investments in key priorities of the University of Nebraska System, including the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s agricultural innovation facility.

The budget package includes \$25 million for the agricultural innovation facility, which will serve as a companion to the United States Department of Agriculture’s proposed National Center for Precision, Resilient and Regenerative Agriculture. Both facilities are being planned for construction on Nebraska Innovation Campus.

“This companion facility will accelerate the conversion of cutting-edge ideas and discoveries from our university’s researchers into innovative products and services resulting in increased productivity and profitability of Nebraska’s farmers, ranchers, agricultural processors and food manufacturers,” said Mike Boehm, vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “This facility will also serve as a business incubator providing an array of supports for Nebraska’s ag entrepreneurs and startup companies.”

As proposed, the \$50 million companion facility will feature a public-private partnership with \$25 million provided via private funds and the remaining \$25 million coming from the approved budget package.

The first floor of the four-story, 80,000-square-foot facility will serve as support space for entrepreneurs, early-state startups and established companies, connecting them with discoveries from federal and university-based



researchers. The other three floors would provide space for state-of-the-art innovation maker spaces, laboratories and high-bay spaces that would bring together researchers and students.

“This multi-faceted, public-private collaboration will yield important economic benefits for our state,” Boehm said. “In all, this initiative has an estimated economic impact of \$1 billion annually, \$170 million in labor income for Nebraskans, and create about 3,200 Nebraska jobs.”

The facility was proposed to the Legislature through [LB 703](#) ([https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view\\_bill.php?DocumentID=47109](https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=47109)). The bill was introduced by Sen. Matt Williams (District 36) of Gothenburg.

The governor also approved \$15 million for the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s pancreatic cancer research center, a \$20 million investment in an expanded statewide student internship program proposed by Nebraska’s chambers of commerce, and \$20 million for a public-private partnership to enhance national defense research in support of U.S. Strategic Command and other entities.

“The budget package signed today by Gov. Ricketts makes important investments in workforce development, research and innovation that will grow Nebraska’s economy and quality of life well into the future,” said Ted Carter, NU system president.

Carter thanked the budget-writing Appropriations Committee, led by Chairman John Stinner of Gering and Vice Chairwoman Anna Wishart of Lincoln, for its work in developing a budget package that included university priorities and the full Legislature for its support.

Carter also credited campus chancellors for bringing forward bold proposals that would draw on historic university strengths for the benefit of Nebraskans and the state’s economic growth.

by University Communication | April 6, 2022

## Source

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