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Wagonhammer Education Center Groundbreaking

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Wagonhammer Education Center Groundbreaking
Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory
August 27, 2003
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

"Last year" when I had the opportunity to speak at the 2002 Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory Open-House I noted the tremendous gift "Pete" and Abbie Gudmundsen gave the university, the people who live throughout their beloved Sandhills, and, indeed, the entire state of Nebraska when they donated their almost 13,000-acre ranch, the Rafter C, to the University of Nebraska Foundation back in 1978.

"Because" of their gift, our faculty, staff, and students have done tremendous work here over the past 20 years or so, providing "research" and "educational efforts" that benefit Nebraska and truly make this the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory.

The Gudmundsens' far-sighted vision and their "generous-gift" make it possible for us to be here today to hear about research-based knowledge that is vital for the sandhills and beyond. "When" we come to the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory we see a dynamic, constantly-evolving example of Nebraska's land-grant university at work, bringing the resources, ^{the} riches, and the technologies of the university to Nebraskans all across our state.

Today we have the joyous opportunity to celebrate another wonderful gift to the university as we break ground for our new education center and laboratory here. To be known as the Wagonhammer Education Center, it, also, is a generous gift of vision, a gift that will enhance our research and extension education programs for Nebraska.

When completed, the Wagonhammer Education Center will accommodate up to 300 people for agricultural events and courses throughout the year. It will create research and teaching space for our faculty and for our graduate students. Additional laboratory space will allow university-scientists to prepare plant and animal samples collected from research projects, and it will provide space for science demonstrations for school-age students. There will be an area to accommodate indoor livestock-teaching-demonstrations. What a tremendous gift this is, and what benefit it will provide Nebraska and those studying, researching, and teaching at Nebraska's great land-grant university.

Two gifts to the University of Nebraska Foundation make today's groundbreaking possible. Elaine and James Wolf of Albion provided the lead gift for this project in 2001. The Wolfs have been great-friends of the university and of Nebraska for years, and we appreciate their vision and generosity. Jim passed away last year, yet what a legacy he has left our state. The new Wagonhammer

Education Center is "named after" the Wolf family's Wagonhammer Cattle Company, which "I understand" has been in the Wolf family for three generations.

Jim Wolf was a cattleman, a banker, and a philanthropist, "active" in many, many organizations. He was a member of the Beef Improvement Association, Nebraska Cattlemen Association, and the Sandhills Cattlemen Association, and he "supported" the Center for Rural Affairs and the Appleseed Foundation. He was a University of Nebraska Foundation "trustee", a position Elaine Wolf also holds. Jim received a Builder Award, the university's "highest award", in 1999. In 1995 The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Block and Bridle Club named him its Man of the Year. He served on the "national board" of the Anti-Defamation League, as well as in "many" other areas.

Elaine Wolf is an active member of the Nebraska "statewide community" as well, having served as a member of the Board of Governors, vice chairman, and "member-of-the-executive-committee" of Nebraska Wesleyan University, and a member of "the board" of Nebraska Public Television and Nebraska Public Radio. The Wolfs "established" the James and Elaine Wolf Nebraska Educational Telecommunications "Excellence-Fund" to benefit public radio, which in turn benefits all of us "who" are public radio listeners.

Elaine is a member of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor's

Club and President's Club, as was Jim. The Wolfs also provided the Schlesinger Professorship for Social Justice at UNL's Judaic studies department, and supported the Leadership Education/Action Development (LEAD) program, among their many activities and contributions.

The Wolfs have been great-supporters in their hometown of Albion and Boone County, as well as of Nebraska. We are so pleased that Elaine Wolf and her son Jay are with us today for this groundbreaking, and we thank you for making all of this a reality.

The second gift that makes this groundbreaking possible today comes from the estate of Ray Bowy of Davey.

For more than 30 years Ray worked for us as the Institute's ranch and livestock manager. He started our Rodeo Club so our students would have the opportunity to work with horses and compete in rodeos across the region. In 1998 he established the Ray and Mildred Bowy Scholarship to provide ongoing support for students in the Rodeo Club.

By his actions Ray Bowy demonstrated his firm belief in our students, as well as his great support for them. He contributed his talents to the Institute for over 30 years in his role as the Institute's ranch and livestock manager, furthering the work we do. The main-auditorium of the Wagonhammer Education Center

will be named the Ray Bowy Conference Room to commemorate Ray's more than 30 years of support and service to the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the university, and the state.

I also know Don Adams, professor of animal science ~~████████████████████~~ ~~████████████████████~~, stationed at the West Central Research and Extension Center "in North Platte," has done a great deal over the years on behalf of this project to meet a need "identified" by our scientists who work here and their clientele. Bob Skates, our facilities manager at West Central, is the project manager for the new building, "working" with the architect to get the needed plans drawn up. And, of course, Gary Hergert, director at West Central, is "especially excited" to see this new center being built here to enhance the work we do for Nebraska. As are we all at the University of Nebraska.

I would be remiss today, as I end my remarks, if I did not thank each member of the IANR team who has worked so hard to make today's "open-house" a success. We are so pleased this groundbreaking ceremony is part of today's open house. All of us know that it takes a great deal of work to make a productive open house occur, and I am "proud" of the fine work done by all the members of our IANR team who contribute to make this happen.

As we break-ground today for the Wagonhammer Education Center, which

will house the Ray Bowy Conference Room, we do so with deep-gratitude for the support and vision that make this possible. We are grateful, also, for the hope for the future these generous gifts bolster and exemplify. I believe Elaine and Jim Wolf and Ray Bowy were thinking futuristically when they made their gifts, building for the future of Nebraska. Their caring and their commitment for our state, the Institute, and the university make what we do today possible, and will, I think, benefit both present and future generations. We celebrate that vision, that caring, and that commitment as we break ground today with gratitude and great hope for Nebraska's future. Thank you.