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Louv Presentation

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Louv Presentation
7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008
Lied Center, Lincoln, NE
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

Good evening everyone, and welcome to this highly-anticipated presentation by Richard Louv, author of “Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.”

I'm John Owens, Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska, and it is my very real pleasure to greet each of you tonight. ~~We have a full house~~ *WHAT A GREAT CROWD* here at the Lied – welcome to each of you! – and I'm also tremendously pleased to welcome those people joining us via satellite at UNL extension locations all across Nebraska, via webstreaming, via UNL's campus channel, and also through Lincoln's public access channel.

I think it's difficult for many of us who grew up in another time, when we "ran free" with our friends "all over" our neighborhoods, and certainly for those of us who grew up ^{on ranch} farm kids, and so early "acclimated" to the rhythms and rhymes of nature, to comprehend "the divide" between today's children and nature that Mr. Louv will talk about tonight. As children, nature was our "constant companion", providing us endless and exciting discoveries in all seasons, wrapping our days into night with sunsets that still can take our breath away. It's astonishing for us to think of children not knowing nature as their friend. So the interest we see in this topic through your presence here tonight must do the heart good for every person who "cares" about children and natural resources.

We in IANR are interested in both. As the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, we know so very well the importance of sustaining and preserving Nebraska's "considerable" natural resources through our research, classroom teaching, and extension education programs. And, through the "combined efforts" of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and the Nebraska Forest Service, the Institute has assisted over 250 Nebraska cities, towns, and villages with "the creation" of public gardens and community green space.

In the Institute we say repeatedly that we are at work for Nebraska, and when we say that, we mean all of Nebraska. We are a state of rural and urban areas, and it takes all of us, working together, to grow a secure and stable future for our state. Last year an independent study found the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources provides Nebraskans a 15-to-1 return on each state tax dollar invested with us, and noted that not only is IANR an innovation economic-engine for the state, it's also a place where students, faculty, and staff work to enhance and sustain the environment and the quality of place in Nebraska. Quality of place is vital to us all.

Tonight's speaker is sponsored by the Healthy Families Play Outside network, a coalition of several groups you'll find listed in your program, including UNL Extension and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, both key parts of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. I welcome you on behalf of all of this event's sponsors, and I thank those whose generous gifts have made this presentation possible.

Now it is my very great pleasure to present to you Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler, well-known “across” Nebraska for his service “both” to this city and to our state. Earlier in his career, when Chris worked as “a development consultant” for the City of Lincoln, he raised millions of dollars for Lincoln’s Parks and Recreation Department. His work “was critical” to “the renovation” of Lincoln’s Sunken Gardens, considered one of the city’s “green jewels.” As a senator he served as “chair” of the Natural Resources Committee, as well as several other legislative committees, where he “earned” the reputation as a fair and respected leader on some of Nebraska’s “most important” issues. He continues those same attributes as the elected leader of our great city.

It is my very great pleasure to introduce to you Lincoln’s Mayor Chris Beutler. Mayor Beutler? (Lead applause.)

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