

May 2008

A Sustainable Rural Nebraska: Academic Program Review for the Nebraska Rural Initiative

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A Sustainable Rural Nebraska



Academic Program Review for the Nebraska Rural Initiative

May 30, 2008

**A Comprehensive Study of the
University of Nebraska Rural Initiative**



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska | **RURAL**
INITIATIVE

A Sustainable Rural Nebraska

Academic Program Review for the Nebraska Rural Initiative

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A Comprehensive Study of the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative



Left Photo: In 2005, Nebraska ranked first nationally in commercial livestock slaughter, third in total number of cattle and calves and second in cattle on feed. Ninety-three percent of the state's land (46.4 million acres) is privately owned. In addition to its vast underground water resources, Nebraska ranks tenth among the states in the number of stream miles. Nebraska is also a national leader in crop production leading the nation in production of Great Northern beans, third in dry edible beans, sixth in alfalfa hay production, third in sorghum grain production, and second in pinto bean production. Sorghum silage production, soybeans, winter wheat, sugar beets and wild hay also play significant roles in Nebraska's agricultural economy. Nebraska's top cash crop is corn and the state's livestock and poultry industries are the largest customers. Products related to agriculture such as irrigation systems and farm equipment are manufactured in the state.

Center Photo: In recent years producers and entrepreneurs have been exploring nontraditional uses for traditional crops. New cash crops include white and other specialty corn, vegetables, popcorn, milkweed, Christmas trees and woody florals. Global food demands, as well as consumer demand for safe healthy locally-grown foods offer new opportunities for producers.

Right Photo: Nebraska ranks number two in the nation in ethanol production and the byproducts provide feed for livestock and other products. With the Union Pacific Railroad and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad both having major presences in Nebraska they are important sources of employment and transportation for the state.

May 30, 2008

Linda R. Pratt
Executive Vice President and Provost
Varner Hall
University of Nebraska
3835 Holdrege Street
Lincoln, NE 68583-0745

Dear Dr. Pratt:

This Academic Program Review follows the self study guidelines provided by your office on April 24, 2008. These guidelines are found immediately following this letter.

Following this letter we have taken the liberty of adding a brief introduction that describes the current state of rural Nebraska. Since the formal beginning of the Rural Initiative in 2002, Rural Nebraska and other rural parts of America have seen dynamic changes. Some are trends that have continued for decades while others are the result of recent interest in water, food, energy and climate change. Unlike 2002 when rural issues were largely ignored by the general public, these trends offer both challenges and opportunities for rural and urban areas and have captured the attention of state, national and global populations. Rural areas are viewed as places where solutions for issues surrounding food, water, energy and climate change will be found.

At the same time rural areas face a changing economy and social structure. While agriculture is a critical part of Nebraska's economy and many rural counties are agriculturally dependent, a study sponsored by the Rural Initiative in 2006 identified five other key industries that provide options for rural diversification. These five "Pillars of Growth" are manufacturing, tourism, trucking, professional and technical services and information industries.

Rural Nebraska continues to experience long term trends that include: outmigration of young people, an aging population, loss of political clout, declining main streets, eroding infrastructure, and substandard housing or housing shortages. In addition, anecdotal reports indicate internet access is often slower and more expensive than in urban areas.

There are also workforce shortages reported in many communities. Some communities have seen a significant influx of international immigrants which provides a much needed workforce but requires extra effort and resources to insure their children receive the education necessary to assume professional and leadership positions in the future. Immigrant families are largely accounting for population growth in many communities and their children will be needed to fill the growing shortages in professional fields such as medicine, education, and resource management to name a few. There is also an emerging leadership gap in many communities as older people retire and there is a shortage of new citizens who are able or willing to serve in public offices.

The trend of farm and ranch operations increasing in size continue although more land is being acquired for small acreages or recreation near towns with natural amenities or other attractions. These trends produce variances in economic vitality and with a few exceptions, declining rural tax bases. The shifting of land and other resources to the next generation, often located outside the state's borders, further weakens many communities. Rising energy costs, water disputes, drought and wildly fluctuating commodity prices ripple across the rural economy to create an atmosphere of uncertainty.

This review provided us with an opportunity to formally articulate our process outlining the future direction of our programs and how we propose to engage Nebraskans and the University in addressing what is an even more rapidly changing world than the one we found in 2002.

We look forward to feedback from both the University administration as well as the insights the review team will provide.

Sincerely,

Sandra K. Scofield
Director

Rural Initiative – Academic Program Review Guidelines

1. A review team should be appointed to evaluate the program and make recommendations about its future. The review team will be appointed by President Milliken with the advice of the Provost.
2. The Director of the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative will prepare a self-study of the program in consultation with the staff and others active in the projects of the Initiative. The self-study may address any issues or projects that the Director, in consultation with staff, deems important, but it must address the following areas:
 - A brief history of the NU Rural Development Initiative since its founding on April 9, 2002 when the Nebraska Legislature adopted LR386 endorsing the efforts of the University of Nebraska in carrying out the objectives of the Rural Initiative.
 - An accounting of where the \$1.5 million was allotted and a history of its annual expenditures since the founding of the Initiative in 2002.
 - A descriptive list of all grants or other sources of funding sought and attained since 2000.
 - The current mission statement, goals, and/or strategic plan of the Rural Initiative.
 - A descriptive index and timeline of the projects of the Rural Initiative. The index and timeline should separate the projects between those the Rural Initiative initiated and was the organizing group, and those with which the Rural Initiative was a supportive and cooperating party.
 - An account of the Rural Initiative's assessment plan and outcome of assessment of its major projects.
 - Vitae of Rural Initiative staff.
 - Discussion of the successes on the Rural Initiative and its impact on the state.
 - Discussion of the weaknesses of the Rural Initiative that need to be addressed to enhance its positive impact on the state.
 - Planning for the next two-five years.
3. Copies of the self-study will be provided to the Review Team Members, the President and the Provost, the Chancellors of UNL, UNO, UNMC and UNK, and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs John Owens of IANR. It is expected the self-study will be completed by May 30, 2008.
4. The Review Team will conduct an onsite visitation of the program. The site visit will include the following:
 - The Review Team will meet at the beginning of the site visit for an orientation meeting with the President, Provost, and the Chancellors. At this meeting, the President shall present the team with a set of questions which it is requested to address in the team's report.
 - Meetings of the review team will be scheduled with the Director and her staff, representatives from UNO, UNMC, and UNK who were provided funds from the \$1.5 million, faculty and staff in related or affiliated programs, and selected external representatives.
5. The Review Team will issue a written report which will evaluate the current state of the program and make recommendations on what the program needs to do to reach the goal of being a premier program in addressing the economic and social issues of rural America.
6. The Review Team report will be provided to the President, the Provost, and the Chancellors, Vice Chancellor John Owens, and the Director of the Rural Initiative. The program shall be given 30 days to submit any written response to the recommendations of the Review Team.

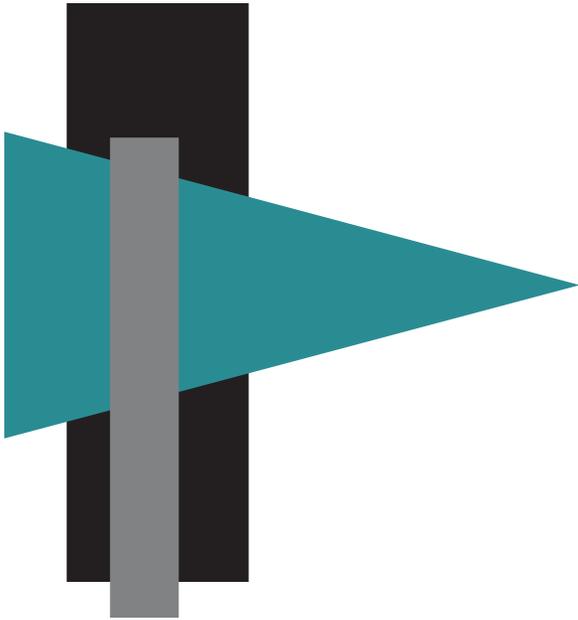
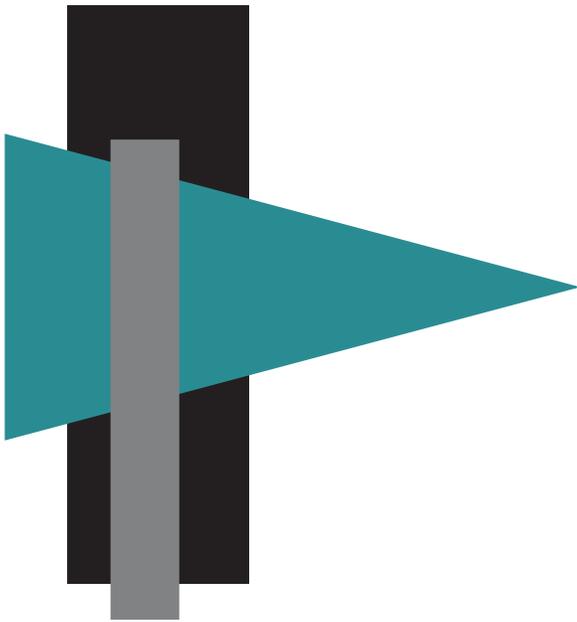


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Overview



► Introduction:

This review process provides the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative with the opportunity to engage in a process of looking at our history and establishing a direction for the future. The Rural Initiative began by reevaluating past programming and goals, and then looked forward towards the next three years. There are many factors affecting rural Nebraska. Many of these factors have been addressed, but others remain untouched. The Nebraska Rural Initiative plays a role in identifying and addressing these issues and aims to promote innovative, collaborative, and systems-based approaches to rural issues that engage decision-makers and rural people at local, regional, state, and national levels.

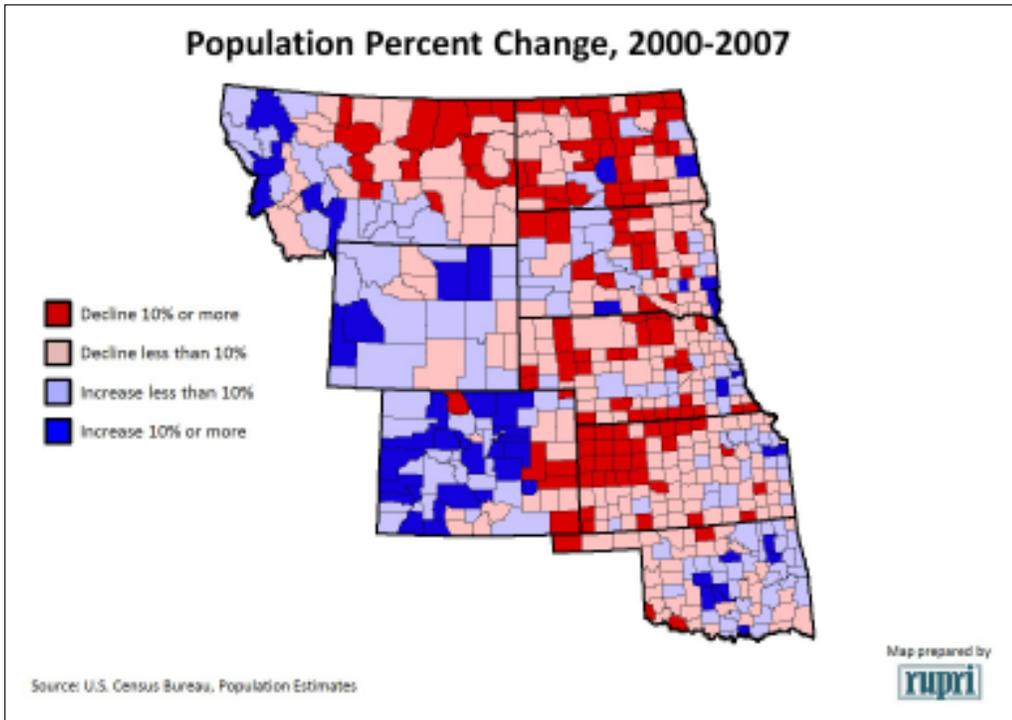
► Demographic Highlights of Rural Nebraska:

Rural Nebraska is facing an uncertain future as are most of the nation's rural areas. Although long-term trends for rural Nebraska and other regions that are heavily dependent on agriculture have not been encouraging, there are several major societal shifts that may significantly alter the opportunities and challenges for rural Nebraska. Whether these shifts are here to stay or not, rural Nebraska needs to be prepared to take full advantage of the opportunities presented and to minimize the challenges faced.

As stated above, many of the long-term trends for rural Nebraska have not been positive. Shifting migration patterns as people move out of the countryside into communities, out of small communities to large trade centers, and out of rural Nebraska to metropolitan centers have left rural economies with fewer workers that have fewer skills than their urban counterparts. In addition, the aging population increases the demand for health care services and reduces public revenues to maintain and build infrastructure. A changing economy with fewer stable wage and salary opportunities and riskier self-employed jobs are of concern. Some of these trends between 2001 and 2006 are listed on the following pages.

Population (from US Census Bureau)

- The population declined by 4.0% (14,762 residents) in the 64 most rural counties, increased by 1.6% in 20 micropolitan (see definitions on Page 6) counties and increased by 6.0% in 9 metropolitan counties. (See Map 1.)
- The 64 most rural counties declined from 21.4% to 20.0% of the Nebraska population.
- The population of children under the age of five declined by 4.4% (932 residents) in the most rural Nebraska counties, but remained at 5.8% of the total population.



Senior Citizens (Age 65 and Older) (from US Census Bureau)

- Rural Nebraska's senior citizen population declined by 4.4% (3,136 residents), while the senior population in 9 metropolitan counties grew by 5.4% (5,400 residents).
- The senior population of Nebraska's most rural counties declined from 19.5% to 19.4% of the total population (compared to 13.2% of the state).

Jobs (from Bureau of Economic Analysis)

- Total employment grew by 3.1% in the 64 most rural counties, increased by 5.0% in 20 micropolitan counties and increased by 5.4% in 9 metropolitan counties.
- The 64 most rural counties declined from 19.0% to 18.6% of all Nebraska jobs.
- Total wage and salary employment grew by 0.6% in the 64 most rural counties, increased by 2.4% in 20 micropolitan counties and increased by 2.9% in 9 metropolitan counties.
- The 64 most rural counties saw an increase of 916 wage and salary jobs, but declined from 15.6% to 15.3% of all Nebraska wage and salary jobs.

- Nebraska's total farm proprietor's employment declined by 5.3%, a loss of 1,608 such jobs in Nebraska's 64 most rural counties.
- Non-farm proprietorships increased by 17.1% in Nebraska's 64 most rural counties, a total of 7,542 jobs.
- Virtually all net growth in rural employment resulted from an increase in non-farm proprietorships.

Income (from Bureau of Economic Analysis)

- Per capita personal income in Nebraska's 64 most rural counties increased by 16.1%, while per capita personal income in 9 metropolitan counties increased by 21.2%.
- Per capita income in Nebraska's 64 most rural counties decreased from 83.8% to 81.1% of the Nebraska state average, and from 75.1% to 71.9% of the Nebraska metropolitan average.
- Total income for non-farm proprietors grew by 5.4% in the most rural counties, compared to growth of 22.9% statewide.
- Income per non-farm proprietor declined 10% in Nebraska's 64 most rural counties.
- In the 64 most rural counties, wage and salary income per job grew by 20.5%, which was faster than the metropolitan growth rate of 19.1% and the micropolitan growth rate of 18.2%.
- Rural wage and salary income per job grew from 78.1% to 79.0% of the state average.
- According to the Economic Research Service, the average per-capita income for all Nebraskans in 2005 was \$32,923. Rural per-capita income lagged at \$27,839.
- In 2004, USDA-ERS estimates indicate a poverty rate of 10.6% in rural Nebraska, compared to a 10.0% level in urban areas of the state.

Education (from USDA ERS)

- Data from 2000 finds that 15.9% of the rural population has not completed high school, while only 11.3% of the urban population lacks a high school diploma.

Minorities (from US Census Bureau)

Between 2001 and 2006:

- The minority population of the 64 most rural Nebraska counties grew by 20.6% (4,603 residents).
- Minorities grew from 6.1% to 7.6% of Nebraska's most rural population.
- Latino growth accounted for 73.9% of rural Nebraska's minority population growth, adding 3,401 new residents.
- Latinos grew from 3.1% to 4.2% of Nebraska's most rural population, and from 8.9% to 10.2% of Nebraska's micropolitan population.
- The population of Latino children under the age of five years increased by 23.5% (353 residents), growing from 7.0% to 9.1% of the rural youth population.

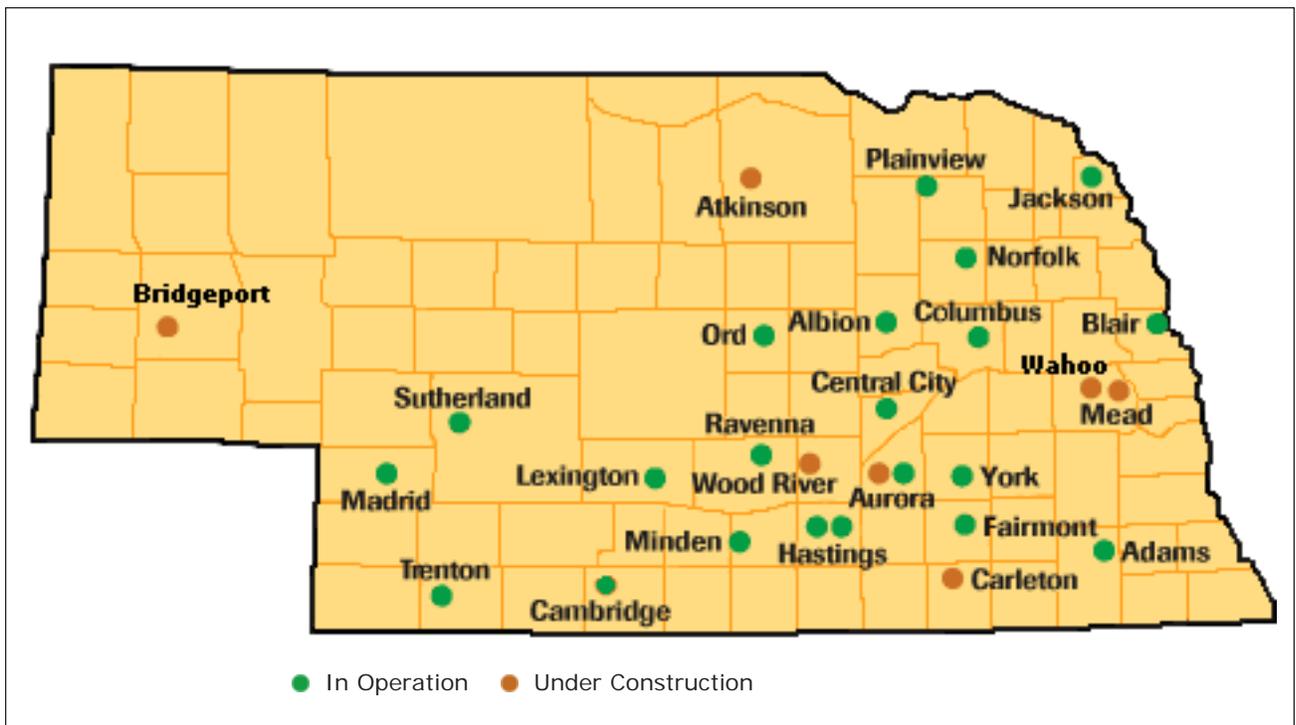
Agriculture (between 1997 and 2002)

- Number of farms decreased by 9.5% (from 54,539 to 49,355)
- Average farm size grew by 10.6% (from 841 to 930 acres)
- Number of farms by sales value % Change Number of farms
 - Less than \$100,000 -6.7% (-2,426)
 - \$100,000 to \$500,000 -19.0% (-3,046)
 - Over \$500,000 + 6.2% (+288)

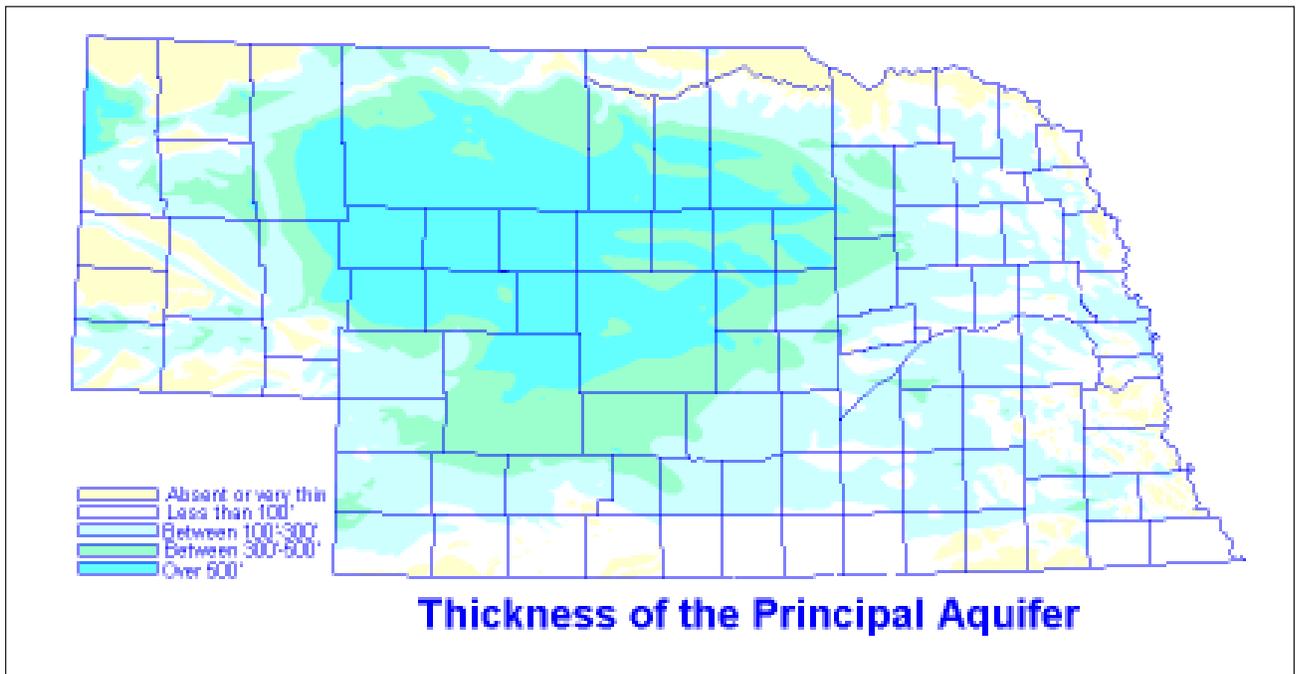
In summary, rural Nebraska is experiencing a decline in population, a slower growth in employment and an increasing discrepancy between its average income per worker and that of the state as a whole, a slightly higher poverty rate than the state's metropolitan areas, a rapidly growing minority population, a decrease in the number of farms, with the biggest loss coming in medium-sized farming operations, and a higher proportion of its population not completing high school compared to the urban centers of the state. All of these provide challenges for the rural areas of the state. Most troubling are the continued loss of population and especially the loss of the educated youth from rural communities.

Despite the ominous long-term trends, recent events in the global, political, and economic environment may provide new and important economic opportunities and challenges for the rural areas of the state. It is important that the State positions itself to capture as much of the benefits as possible for rural Nebraska while carefully managing the challenges. Some of the important economic changes are discussed below.

- National commitment to develop a renewable energy industry will:
 - Increase the demand for corn and cellulosic ethanol, which should positively impact rural communities through higher commodity prices and value-added opportunities in rural areas (See Map 2.)
 - Create opportunities for wind power generation
- Increased world demand for food as bio-fuel production competes for resources, and as incomes rise in developing countries will:
 - Increase the demand for commodities, positively impacting incomes in rural communities
 - Put pressure on the natural resource base that will require careful stewardship
- National commitment to address global warming may:
 - Increase income opportunities through payments for carbon sequestration
 - Provide incentives to buy more locally grown food
- Increased competition for water and land from existing and new economic activities will:
 - Make Nebraska's vast underground water reserve more valuable in future years, which, if carefully managed, should add value in rural Nebraska
 - Increase income opportunities in rural Nebraska from new land uses such as: direct marketing of food as well as agriculture and ecological-based tourism



Map 2. Ethanol Plants in Nebraska, March 24, 2008, (from Nebraska Ethanol Board).



Map 3. Nebraska's Aquifer Thickness.

Definitions:

Micropolitan – a micropolitan area is made up of one or more counties having at least one urban center with a population between 10,000 and 50,000. Nebraska has 10 core micropolitan cities (Beatrice, Columbus, Fremont, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lexington, Norfolk, North Platte, and Scottsbluff) with a total of 20 associated counties.

Metropolitan – a metropolitan area is made up of one or more counties having at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants. Nebraska has all or parts of three metropolitan areas containing a total of nine Nebraska counties (the Lincoln Metropolitan area: Lancaster and Seward Counties; the Omaha metropolitan area: Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders and Washington Counties in Nebraska; and Souix City Iowa Metropolitan area that contains Dakota and Dixon Counties in Nebraska).



History



The University of Nebraska Rural Initiative had its beginnings in 2000 with discussions of the role of the University of Nebraska in Public Service and Engagement. Attached is a document provided by Regent Chuck Hassebrook that describes the need and provides the background and rationale for a legislative request to enhance the University’s service and engagement with Nebraska citizens. (See Appendix A.)

Legislation was submitted in January 2001 to the Nebraska Unicameral (LB588, the Rural Initiative Act) by Senator Cap Dierks “to further engage the University of Nebraska in efforts to improve the economic and social vitality of rural Nebraska.”

To complement the proposed legislation, President Smith, Chancellors Belck, Johnson, Maurer, Perlman and Vice President and Vice Chancellor Owens charged the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) Associate Vice Chancellor Edna McBreen to chair a Rural Development Task Force and prepare a report. Other members of the Task Force were: Dr. John Allen (UNL)/IANR), Dr. Barbara Audley (UNK), Dr. David Hinton (UNO), Dr. Keith Mueller (UNMC), Dr. Mike Sitorius (UNMC), and Dr. Steve Taylor (UNL/IANR). The “Introduction and Summary” of the report stated “The University of Nebraska Rural Development Initiative will focus appropriate resources from throughout the University on the primary goal of community vitality in rural Nebraska. . . The University’s ability to launch the Rural Initiative is predicated upon receiving the funding requested in the University’s budget for Engagement.” The report articulated goals, proposed programming, organizational structure, and budget requirements. The report was submitted on May 1, 2001.

LB 588 did not advance in 2001 and was carried over to the 2002 session. Senator Dierks introduced an interim study, LR 194, at the end of the 2001 legislative session “to seek further input on the role of the University of Nebraska in addressing rural issues and the feasibility and desirability of programs and initiatives that meet rural development needs. It is the intent of this study to identify those programs or initiatives that would be of greatest value and how these will complement and strengthen the efforts of other agencies and programs involved in rural development issues. The study shall solicit the input of the Partnership for Rural Development for recommendations to carry out the purposes of LB 588.” The study was referred to the Agriculture Committee.

On July 17, 2001 President Smith asked Dr. John Allen (UNL/IANR) and Mr. Bob Bernier (UNO/Nebraska Business Development Center) to serve as co-chairs to “further develop the university-wide Rural Development Initiative.” (See Appendix B.) Committee members continued to be Dr. Keith Mueller, Dr. Steve Taylor, Dr. Mike Sitorius, Dr. Barbara Audley, and Dr. David Hinton.

In the 2002 legislative session, LB 588 was prioritized by the Agriculture Committee and advanced to General File for the first round of debate. The bill ran into opposition and was indefinitely postponed at the end of the 2002 legislative session. Senator Dierks introduced and passed LR 386 in April 2002 which stated, “The Legislature endorses the efforts of the University of Nebraska in carrying out the objectives of the Rural Initiative” and “urges the University of Nebraska to provide collaborative leadership and continue its partnership activities with other entities working in the area of rural economic development.” “The Legislature further urged the University of Nebraska to continue to strive for excellence in the area of rural development” and urged the “creation of an advisory body consisting of internal and external representatives interested in the well-being of rural Nebraska to advise on priorities for the Rural Initiative’s programs, services and policy strategies.” No new funds were appropriated to the University for these purposes. However, the Board of Regents identified Public Service Engagement as a priority and reallocated a total of \$1,500,000 over the FY 2001-2003 biennium toward this effort. In FY 2001-2002 the sum of \$750,000 was reallocated, with the same amount reallocated in FY 2002-2003. Of the \$1,500,000, a total of \$800,000 was allocated to UNL, \$435,000 to UNMC and \$265,000 to UNO.

In May, 2002, Dr. Allen and Mr. Bernier and their committee submitted the “Report to President L. Dennis Smith on The NU Rural Development Initiative – Progress through May, 2002. The Task Force proposed the following vision statement: “The University of Nebraska will be a recognized resource on rural development and a partner in a statewide effort that increases the empowerment and capabilities of communities, organization, families, and individuals throughout Nebraska to secure levels of vitality necessary for sustained economic and social development.”

The report went on to state “The overall goal of the Rural Initiative is the revitalization of rural life” and identified six critical needs in rural Nebraska:

- Rural sustainability and community capacity building, business development and e-business
- Distance education
- Telehealth/telemedicine
- Niche crops/value-added activities
- Youth and young adult leadership and development
- Food systems security

The following list contains the Task Force Summary of Recommendations:

1. Designate a respected member of the University of Nebraska faculty to lead the Rural Development Initiative.
2. Create a Rural Initiative Advisory Board to replace the current Task Force.
3. Develop an information clearinghouse to coordinate programs across campus.
4. Create a Rural Scholars Program to operate across the University of Nebraska system.
5. Apply for grants related to specific projects that fall under the Rural Initiative.

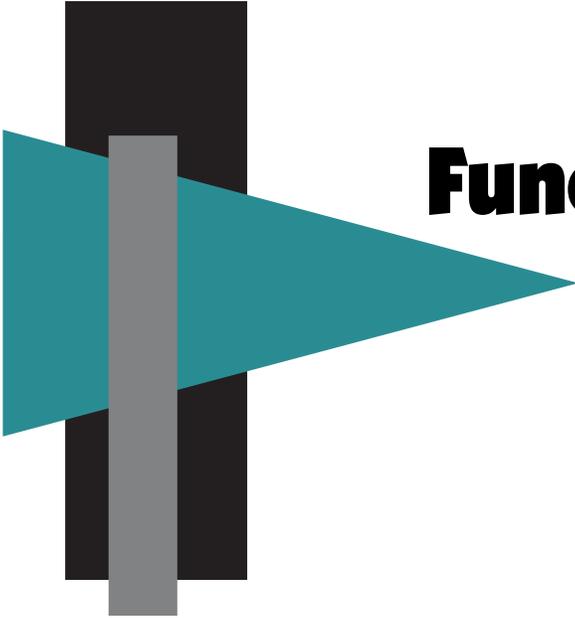
Dr. John Allen directed the Rural Initiative after the completion of the work of the Task Force. One staff person was hired to assist as Coordinator of the Initiative. Later that year Sandra Scofield, Director of UNL's Center for Mathematics, Science and Computer Education was approached by IANR and asked to lead the Rural Initiative. On July 24, 2002 Dr. John Owens, Vice President and Vice Chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources offered Ms. Scofield a reassignment in responsibilities to serve as Director for the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative effective immediately. The Rural Initiative was housed in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Director reported to Dr. Owens.

In order to transition from her duties as Director of the Center for Mathematics, Science and Computer Education, Ms. Scofield spent part of her time for the next few months attending to responsibilities in both the Center for Mathematics, Science and Computer Education and the Rural Initiative.

Work immediately began on reviewing information related to previous work in Nebraska and beyond on rural development, meeting with key individuals in the University and the state who were involved in rural programming, developing plans and budgets, and developing the Rural Initiative Clearinghouse. An additional staff member was hired to work on technology issues and to assist with seeking federal funds. A new temporary mission statement was adopted to bring more focus to the Initiative's work while initial planning and programming continued. That mission statement stated: "Working in partnership with faculty, staff, students and individuals and organizations external to the University who are dedicated to rural development, the Rural Initiative will strive to insure knowledge and research are connected with communities, small businesses, entrepreneurs and profit and nonprofit organizations in nonmetropolitan areas to solve problems and create opportunities. It is anticipated new partnerships will also encourage new research relevant to nonmetropolitan issues."

As a result from listening sessions held across the state, surveying a number of organizations in Nebraska who are engaged in some aspect of rural development, and continued planning to define the proper role that the University should play in the rural development arena, the present mission statement was adopted. (See Page 21.)

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Funding Expenditures



The following is an accounting from July 1, 2001 through April 30, 2008 of expenditures for the \$800,000 allotted to the Rural Initiative housed in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. A total of \$1.5 million was allotted, with the \$700,000 balance going to the University of Nebraska-Omaha and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The reports for these two institutions are contained in e-mail messages copied and included on Pages 15-18.

University of Nebraska, Public Engagement Program: U-wide Budget Allocations

	FY 2002	FY2003	Subsequent Years
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	\$400,000*	\$800,000	\$800,000
University of Nebraska Med Center	\$217,500	\$435,000	\$435,000
University of Nebraska-Omaha	\$132,500	\$265,000	\$265,000
Total Program Funding	\$750,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000

NOTES:

Program fund allocations are managed locally within each institution.

July 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002, program co-directors: Dr. John Allen and Mr. Bob Bernier

July 1, 2002 - present, program director: Sandra Scofield

*Only \$250,000 of the \$400,000 UNL allocation was released to IANR for Public Engagement activities during FY2002.

Nebraska Rural Initiative Budget History -- FY2002 through FY2008

(budget history only for the piece of RI housed within IANR)

	FY2002 \$	FY2003 \$	FY2004 \$	FY2005 \$	FY2006 \$	FY2007 \$	FY2008 \$
FUNDING	250,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000
Carryover		191,706	680,743	821,507	515,788	243,000	307,584
Budget Adjustment		675	526	2,058	52,524	46,251	77,980
Total Resources	250,000	991,706	1,481,269	1,623,565	1,368,312	1,089,251	1,185,564
Salaries and wages	55,382	156,865	486,813	816,067	750,629	483,640	457,807
Benefits		30,315	92,085	163,369	155,329	93,978	99,261
Operating expenses	2,618	31,262	62,561	89,540	137,025	96,993	55,541
Operating supplies	294	31,064	9,275	23,943	43,872	43,328	32,224
Travel expense		10,107	8,353	12,358	36,990	37,611	18,525
Capital outlay		50,675		2,500	1,467	26,117	18,573
Total expenditures	58,294	310,288	659,087	1,107,777	1,125,312	781,667	681,931**
END BALANCE	191,706	680,743	821,507	515,788	243,000	307,584	

*FY2002 -- \$250,000 of the \$400,000 was allotted to UNL and managed by John Allen

**FY2008 figures are current through April 30, 2008 (10 months of the fiscal year)

 **UNO e-Mail:**

To: Julie Totten/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
cc: sscofield1@unl.edu, Mark R Gustafson/RURAL/IANR/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
Sub: Request

Hi Julie,

I need your help in responding to Sandy Scofield's request (see below note). How has the money allocated to UNO been expended?

Between FY 2002 and 2003, the Board of Regents allocated in their distribution of funding to the campuses \$750,000 each of these two years to a program entitled "Public Service/Engagement". For UNL that became the funding for the Rural Initiative. According to the budget allocation records UNO received \$132,500 for each of these two fiscal years for a total of \$265,000. Identification of how these monies have been expended is necessary for the study that Varner Hall is conducting this summer of the Rural Initiative. Note Sandy's self study report is due May 30.

Your assistance is appreciated. Thanks, Alan

To: Alan Moeller/VC/IANR/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
cc: Noren Everts/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEHR@University of Nebraska, Deborah Smith-Howell/
FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEHR@University of Nebraska, BJ Reed/FACSTAFF/UNO/
UNEHR@University of Nebraska, John Christensen/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEHR@University
of Nebraska, Kathy Pfeiffer/BUSFIN/UNO/UNEHR
Sub: Public Service - Request for Information

Alan,

UNO received a total of \$265,000 for Public Service Engagement over a two year period, fiscal years 2001-02 and 2002-03. We have not separately accounted for the expenditure of these funds. Although I can not provide a detailed expenditure report I can provide a report of Community Engagement Activities. Please see the attached document prepared by UNO Academic Affairs. Our investment in community engagement well exceeds \$265,000 and has multiplied with external funding. The acknowledgement in 2001-02 that public service engagement was an area of emphasis helped serve as a catalyst for these activities. Many are focused on the metropolitan area but the reach is much broader. Note in particular the state-wide service by the Center for Public Affairs Research, the School of Public Administration and the Nebraska Business Development Center.

(See attached file: UNO CE May 08 Report.doc) [See Appendix C]

We hope that this meets your reporting needs.

Julie

To: Julie Totten/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of Nebraska
cc: BJ Reed/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of Nebraska, Deborah Smith-Howell/
FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of Nebraska, John Christensen/FACSTAFF/UNO/
UNEBR@University of Nebraska, Kathy Pfeiffer/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of
Nebraska, Sheri Noren Everts/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of Nebraska,
sscofield1@unl.edu, Mark R Gustafson/RURAL/IANR/UNEBR@University of Nebraska
Sub: Re: Public Service - Request for Information

Thanks Julie. Just to make sure I have covered all basis, are you saying that the programs and expenditures for community engagement increased by \$265,000 since the Public Service/Engagement funds were allocated to UNO during Fiscal Years 02 and 03, or were these programs already in existence at that time?

To: Alan Moeller/VC/IANR/UNEBR@University of Nebraska
cc: BJ Reed/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of Nebraska, Deborah Smith-Howell/
FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of Nebraska, John Christensen/FACSTAFF/UNO/
UNEBR@University of Nebraska, Kathy Pfeiffer/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of
Nebraska, Sheri Noren Everts/FACSTAFF/UNO/UNEBR@University of Nebraska,
sscofield1@unl.edu, Mark R Gustafson/RURAL/IANR/UNEBR@University of Nebraska
Sub: Re: Public Service - Request for Information

Although I can not specifically track the \$265,000 I feel comfortable stating that the programs and expenditures for community engagement increased by \$265,000 since the Public Service Engagement funds were allocated in fiscal years 02 and 03

Julie Totten

 **UNMC e-Mail:**

To: John Adams/CHANC/UNMC/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
cc: sscofield1@unl.edu, Mark R Gustafson/RURAL/IANR/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
Sub: Request

Hi John,

I need your help in responding to Sandy Scofield's request (see below note). How has the "Public Service/Engagement" "money allocated to UNMC been expended?"

Between FY 2002 and 2003, the Board of Regents allocated in their distribution of funding to the campuses \$750,000 each of these two years to a program entitled "Public Service/Engagement". For UNL that became the funding for the Rural Initiative. According to the budget allocation records UNMC received \$217,500 for each of these two fiscal years for a total of \$435,000. Identification of how these monies have been expended is necessary for the study that Varner Hall is conducting this summer of the Rural Initiative. Note Sandy's self study report is due May 30.

Your assistance is appreciated. Thanks, Alan

To: Alan Moeller/VC/IANR/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
cc: sscofield1@unl.edu
Sub: FW: Request

Alan,

I checked with Bob Bartee and Chris Kabourek. The general request category was Public Engagement, but UNMC residencies were not directly related to the IANR Rural Initiative.

John C. Adams, Ph.D.
Asst. Vice Chancellor for Budget and Strategic Planning
Ph: 402-559-9567
Fx: 402-559-4396

To: John Adams/CHANC/UNMC/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
cc: sscofield1@unl.edu, Mark R Gustafson/RURAL/IANR/UNEHR@University of Nebraska
Sub: Request

John, Thanks for the update. If the money that UNMC received did not go to UNMC residencies, can you determine to what than UNMC directed the \$435,000?

Thanks, Alan

To: Alan Moeller/VC/IANR/UNEBR@University of Nebraska
cc: sscofield1@unl.edu
Sub: FW: Request

Yes, the money went to residencies.

To: John Adams/CHANC/UNMC/UNEBR@University of Nebraska
cc: sscofield1@unl.edu, Mark R Gustafson/RURAL/IANR/UNEBR@University of Nebraska
Sub: Request

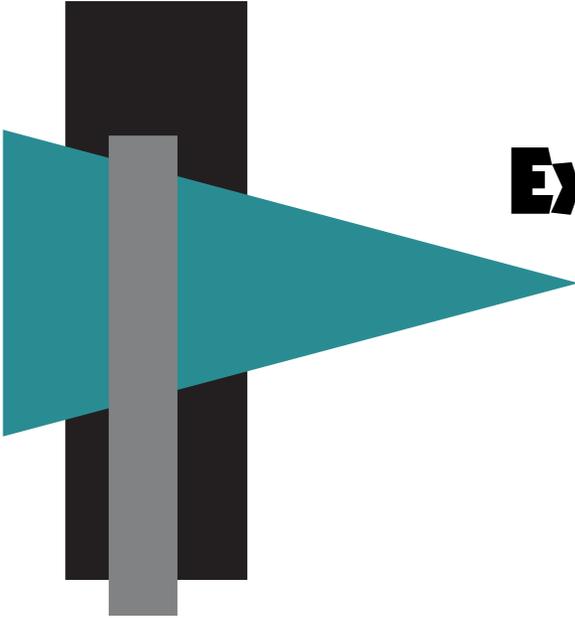
Thank you John, you have been most helpful.

Hope all is well with you. The UNMC campus is really looking nice these days with the new construction nearing completion. However, I view Medical Centers like the roads departments—there is always new construction somewhere.

The twin towers and the new Sorrell Center will really add to the campus.

Take care.

Alan



External Funding



• **USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant**
Regional Economic Development of the Nebraska Panhandle

Principal Investigators:

Sandy Scofield
Brito Mutunayagam

Date Applied: July, 2003

Amount Requested: \$49,716

The grant was not awarded.

• **United States Department of Agriculture**
*Virtual Center for Community Development:
Local Benefits for Global Connection*

Principal Investigators:

Arlen Etling
Deana Namuth
Susan Fritz

Date Applied: September, 2004

Amount Requested: \$99,593

The grant was not awarded.

• **Nebraska State Records Board Grant**
Basic e-Government and Access e-Government Training

Principal Investigator:

Phyllis Schoenholz

Date Applied: 2004

Amount Requested: \$25,000

The grant was awarded.

• **Institution of Education Sciences-
Research and Development Center Grant**
Rural Education

Principal Investigators:

Sandra Scofield Miles Bryant
Roger Bruning Art Zygielbaum

Date Applied: March, 2004

Amount Requested: \$9,300,000

The grant was not awarded.

• **Research Cluster Planning Grant**
*Nebraska's Partnership for Rural
Entrepreneurship and Innovation (NPREI)*

Principal Investigators:

Nancy Miller Eric Arnould
Kim Todd Sloane Signal
Bryan Reiling

Date Applied: 2004

Amount Requested: \$5,000

The grant was awarded.

• **UNL Enhancing Teaching and Learning**
Principal Investigators:

Eric Arnould Nancy Miller
Kim Todd Sloane Signal
Bryan Reiling Sandra Scofield

Date Applied: November, 2004

Amount Requested: \$9,973

The grant was awarded.

● **National Science Foundation**
*Nebraska Partners: Fostering Rural
Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education*

Principal Investigators:

Nancy Miller Alan Baquet
Bryan Reiling Sandra Scofield
Kim Todd

Date Applied: June, 2005

Amount Requested: \$591,749

The grant was not awarded.

● **US Department of Agriculture Rural
Development Program**

*Hunting and Recreation Cooperative
feasibility study*

Principal Investigator:

Pat Ptacek

Date Applied: May, 2005

Amount Requested: \$50,000

The grant was awarded.

● **USDA-Conservation Effects Assessment
Program**

*Assessment of Agricultural Conservation
Efforts to Protect Communities' Wellhead
and Private Drinking Water*

Principal Investigators:

Wayne Woldt Derrel Martin
Sandra Scofield Raymond Supalla
Sharon Skipton

Date Applied: March, 2005

Amount Requested: \$658,935

The grant was not awarded.

● **The Transportation, Treasury, HUD Grant**

Principal Investigator:

Sandy Scofield

Date Applied: November, 2005

Amount Requested: \$198,000

The grant was awarded.

● **The Transportation, Treasury, HUD Grant**

Principal Investigator:

Sandy Scofield

Date Applied: November, 2005

Amount Requested: \$99,000

The grant was awarded.

● **Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
(NIFA)**

*Housing Issues in Nebraska Communities:
Older Population Needs*

Principal Investigator:

Shirley Niemeyer

Date Applied: May, 2006

Amount Requested: \$9751

Match Amount: \$1000

The grant was not awarded.

● **Nebraska Department of Agriculture-
USDA**

Specialty Crops Block Grant

Principal Investigators:

Kim Peterson Joan Scheel

Date Applied: September, 2007

Amount Requested: \$26,034

The grant was awarded.

● **Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
(RUPRI)**

Principal Investigators:

Randy Cantrell Eric
Thompson

Date Applied: November, 2007

Amount Requested: \$14,000

The grant was awarded.

● **Nebraska Department of Health and
Human Services**

*Pilot Demographic and Economic Model
Report*

Principal Investigators:

Randy Cantrell Sandy Scofield

Date Applied: May, 2007

Amount Requested: \$ 2,500

The contract was awarded.

● **Communities and the Built Environment**
*Sustainable Rural Communities through
Adaptive Management of Water Supply*

Principal Investigators:

David Gosselin Wayne Woldt

Randy Cantrell Paul Blum

Karina Schoengold Alan Tomkins

Date Applied: February, 2007

The grant was not awarded.

● **National Science Foundation**
*CRI: IAD Hybrid Wireless Network
Infrastructure for Lab, Campus and Field
Deployments*
Principal Investigator:
Byravamurthy Ramamurthy
Date Applied: August, 2007
Amount Requested: \$ 299,991
The grant was not awarded.

● **Nebraska Department of Health and
Human Services**
HRSA State Offices of Rural Health
Principal Investigators:
Dennis Berens Sandy Scofield
Date Applied: February, 2008
Amount Received: \$ 3,500
The contract was awarded.

● **Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Block Grant**
Specialty Crop Block Grant
Principal Investigators:
Kim Peterson Elaine Cranford
Joan Scheel
Date Applied: January, 2008
Requested Amount: \$26,796
The grant was not awarded.

● **USDA/CREES Rural Development Grant**
Relocation to the Buffalo Commons
Principal Investigators:
Randy Cantrell
Bruce Johnson
Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel
Date Applied: January, 2006
Amount Requested: \$220,387
The grant was awarded.

● **USDA/ NRI Grant**
*Marketing Rural Communities to Attract
and Retain Workers*
Principal Investigators:
Randy Cantrell
Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel
Date Applied: April, 2008
Amount Requested: \$498,558
The grant was awarded.

● **National Science Foundation Grant**
Nebraska Math
Principal Investigators:
Ruth Heaton
James Lewis
Date Applied: April, 2008
Amount Requested: \$9,000,000
The grant is pending.

● **USDA NRI Small and Medium Sized
Farm Profitability Program**
*Identifying Strategies to Achieve
Profitability and Longevity for Beginning
and Established Small-to-Medium-Sized
Farms in the Northern Great Plains*
Principal Investigators:
Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel
Joe Atwood
Saleem Shaik
Date Applied: May, 2008
Amount Requested: \$498,000
The grant is pending.

Letters of Support Provided or Funding Match Offered:

● **Rural Housing Service- Office of
Research Management**
*Hope for the Future: A capacity-building
approach to rural community building*
Principal Investigators:
Leverne Barrett
Daniel Wheeler
Date Applied: November, 2003
Amount Requested: \$ 251,415
Match Amount: \$60,000
The grant was not awarded.

● **USDA- Rural Community Development
Initiative**
Principal Investigator:
Leverne Barrett
Date Applied: October, 2003
Amount committed: \$20,000
The grant was not awarded.

● **NRI Proposal**

*Fostering Small Farm and Rural
Community Business Development*

Principal Investigator:

Nancy Miller

Date Applied: September, 2004

Amount Requested: \$600,000

The grant was not awarded.

● **CSREES Integrated Organic Program-
USDA**

*Research and Extension Program to assist
Organic Producers and Processors in the
Production and Marketing of Further
Processed Food Products*

Principal Investigator:

David McLaren

Date Applied: April, 2005

Match Amount: \$5000

The grant was not awarded.

● **U.S. Department of Agriculture-
CSREES**

*Preparing Women in Leadership in the
Food Industry through Training in
Agricultural and Food Industry
Organizations*

Principal Investigators:

Azzeddine Azzam Jeffrey Royer

Konstantions Giammakas

Sandy Scofield Amalia Yiannaka

Date Applied: September, 2005

Amount Requested: \$128,000

The grant was awarded.

● **Technology Grant**

Department of Information Science and
Quantitative Analysis- University of
Nebraska-Omaha

Principal Investigator:

Sajda Qureshi

Date Applied: December, 2007

Amount Requested:

This grant is pending.



Mission & Goals



► Mission:

The University of Nebraska Rural Initiative focuses the knowledge, skills and creativity on the four campuses (Kearney, Lincoln, Omaha and the Medical Center) upon stabilizing and enhancing the economy and quality of life in nonmetropolitan Nebraska. We are committed to working in partnership with federal, state and local governments, communities, businesses, agriculture, non-governmental organizations, and other institutions of higher education to achieve our mission.

► Role:

A key role of the Rural Initiative is to provide a bridge between NU faculty, students, campuses, and centers that are or can be actively engaged in cross disciplinary research and outreach that may lead to practices and policies that promote the social and economic future of nonmetropolitan areas. Many faculty are already doing great research and outreach on our campuses and others have potential. Our role is to see the big picture and connect disparate units with relevant skills and interests in order to maximize the impact their research and outreach can have, first on Nebraska, but also on the Great Plains, nationally and internationally.

► Goals:

1. Connect Nebraskans with knowledge relevant to building their futures.
2. Originate and support research that benefits community, regional and economic development in nonmetropolitan Nebraska.
3. Spur innovation, investment and wise use of resources to benefit Nebraskans.

Values:

Nebraska – Nebraska’s strength and future are in our land and people: the natural and physical resources, upon which our economy is historically based, and the spirit, resourcefulness and concern for one another that are the hallmarks of our culture and will carry us forward.

The University – We appreciate the wealth of resources available throughout the University system and their capacity and potential to serve Nebraska.

Regionalism – We work regionally knowing that communities and individuals must work together for a viable and brighter future.

Cooperation – We build coalitions which include communities, government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, businesses in all sectors including agriculture, schools, other institutions and other units within the University. We foster relationships that build on Nebraska’s strengths.

Risk – Inherent in valuing risk is our willingness to acknowledge and learn from failure, question the status quo, embrace change and encourage laughter.

Innovation – We thrive on innovation- creating something new based on recognized opportunity. We see research and discovery as the primary drivers of innovation and recognize the need to bring new ideas together with existing knowledge to create yet another frontier of advancement.

Transfer – Once products and programs are developed and tested, we believe in the timely transfer of these products and programs to other entities for implementation so we can begin the process of innovation anew.

Technology – We believe in the power of technology as a tool for development and work to model the highest and best use of available technologies in our work.

Before Developing a Project, We Ask:

Does this build on University strengths?

- Is it focused in research and/or education?
- Are there opportunities for collaboration within the University system? Externally?

Is it our job?

- Does it fit with our mission and values?
- Is someone else doing it? If so, who and how well?

Who’s going to pay for it?

- How much will it cost?
- Funding sources are identified.

Do we have the necessary resources, financial and otherwise?

- What do we need besides money? Time? Expertise? Materials?
- Where will we get what we need?
- Who can we partner with to leverage our resources?

What is our role?

- Is our part articulated clearly and understood by all involved?

Do we have time to do it right?

- Is it manageable?
- Is it sustainable?

How will we evaluate the project?

- How will we document successes, failures and lessons learned?

What is our return on investment?

So what?

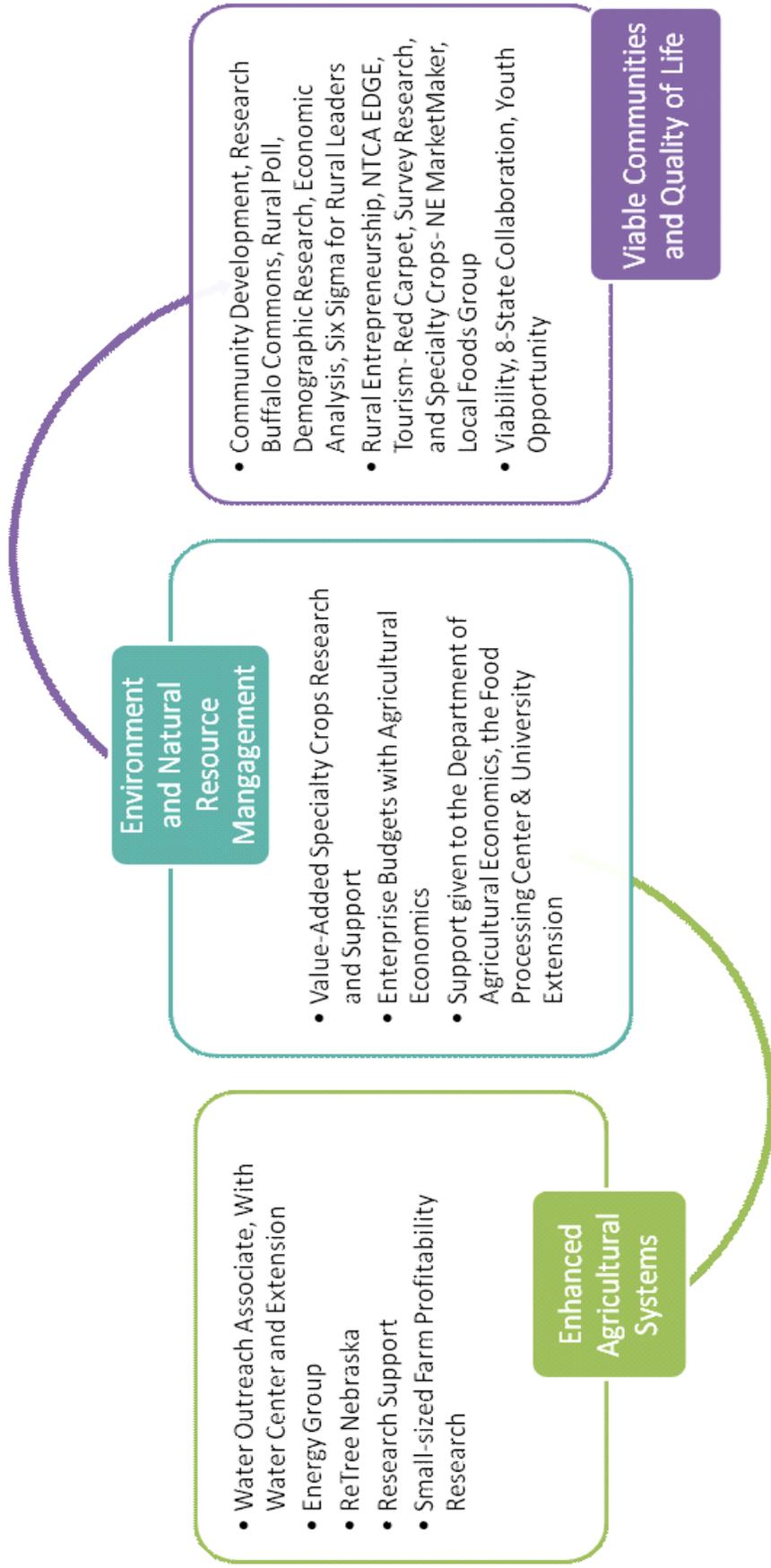
- Will this make a difference for the people of Nebraska? Now? In five years? In twenty years?

 **Strategic Plan:**

It is important to note that because of our placement in the institution as a University-wide initiative that reports to the Vice President and Vice Chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, we strive to align our work with both the University's strategic plan and the strategic plan for the Institute. The following illustrations demonstrate how our programming fits into this larger picture.

Nebraska Rural Initiative – Strategic Program Themes

Mission: The University of Nebraska Rural Initiative is a University-wide program that focuses the knowledge, skills and creativity of the four campuses—Kearney, Lincoln, Omaha and the Medical Center—on stabilizing and enhancing the economy and quality of life in nonmetropolitan Nebraska. We work in partnership with federal, state, and local governments, communities, businesses, agriculture, nonprofits and other institutions of higher education to achieve our mission.



University of Nebraska Lincoln's Strategic Plan

The University exists to serve Nebraskans through quality teaching, research and outreach and engagement. Nebraska Rural Initiative has had initiatives in each of the six areas represented.

To provide the opportunity for Nebraskans to enjoy a better life through access to high quality affordable undergraduate, graduate and professional education.
RI provides students with assistantships, internships and also funds student workers.

To build and sustain undergraduate, graduate and professional programs of high quality with an emphasis on excellent teaching.
RI supports the development of new horticultural entrepreneurship curriculum.

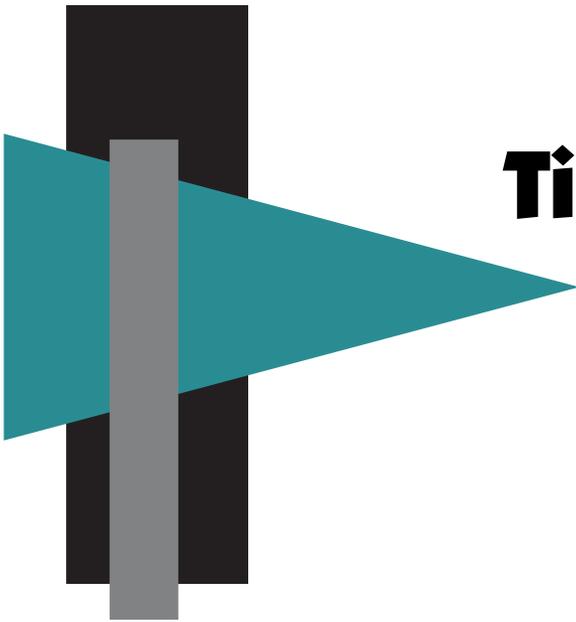
To play a critical role in building a talented competitive workforce and knowledge based economy in Nebraska.
RI supports entrepreneurship programming and participates in the campus entrepreneurship group.

To pursue excellence in regional, national and international competitiveness in research and scholarly activity. In addition, UNL tries to focus on areas of strategic importance and opportunity.
RI supports faculty research in areas relevant to rural Nebraska. Specific areas of interest are: water, food, energy, and climate change impacts.

To serve the entire state through strategic and effective engagement and coordination with citizens, businesses, agriculture, and other educational institutions.
RI provides Red Carpet Service training and other tourism-related programs, along with various collaborations across the state, and support on water outreach.

The University will be cost effective and accountable to the citizens of the state.
RI maintains careful records and uses a predetermined checklist to determine if projects are effective and cost efficient.

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Timeline of Projects



The rationale for funding programs is embedded in the Rural Initiative philosophy that we should assist programs of proven worth to rural areas (for example, EDGE) when they require funding, that we should support expansion of programs that show potential to provide more service to rural areas (for example, the Procurement Technical Assistance Program at UNK), to encourage innovation and experimentation (for example, the collaboration with Extension's Community Development Team), and to support or encourage research that will have applicability in improving the economy or quality of life in rural Nebraska or that informs our future planning. Finally, one of our major goals is to increase the number of faculty and students we engage in work that benefits rural Nebraska.

2003

- Library Database Project – Initiated and provided financial support to purchase Metafind software for libraries that allowed research searches across all four university campuses and built the initial Rural Initiative database on the website [<http://iris.unl.edu/>]. (*initiated*)
- CREATE² – provided registration fees for eight people to attend Heartland Center for Leadership-E², a program focusing on entrepreneurship programming. (*initiated*)
- Eric Arnold, Agribusiness Marketing Professor in the College of Business was provided funding to conduct distance education sessions on rural tourism and marketing. (*initiated*)
- Glen Cox – instructed a weeklong camp for the 4-H Technology Team, demonstrating how to build a server and computer. (*initiated*)
- Intern Program – ten undergraduate students (eight from the JD Edwards Program and two from Community and Regional Planning) were placed in rural communities or regions across the state for a ten-week period to provide technological support for various community and economic development projects. (*initiated*)

- Recorded speakers on rural development and leadership and then duplicated multiple copies that were distributed to rural Nebraska communities. (*initiated*)
- IANR Listening Sessions – attended over 25 listening sessions (*cooperated*) and surveyed the participants on current issues and the responses were analyzed. (*initiated*)
- EDGE Support – provided six-month salary support for the EDGE Director. NebraskaEDGE aims to assist small business owners and their partners to start and improve their businesses. (*cooperated*)
- *Finding a Home in the Country* publication – funded and published success stories of rural Nebraska businesses. (*contracted*)
- NU Skills/WEBEX- support given for start-up fees for the Communications and Information Technology (CIT) program to enhance the delivery of information and facilitate meetings virtually. (*cooperated*)
- Supported Professor Brito Mutunayagam’s undergraduate class to travel to western Nebraska for a Sandhills area economic development project. (*cooperated*)

2004

- Communities of the Future – seven UNL Extension Educators were funded and allowed to focus 100% of their time on community and economic development. (*initiated*)
- Intern Program – twelve undergraduate students were placed in rural communities or regions across the state for a ten-week period to provide support for various community and economic development projects. (*initiated*)
- Library Database Project – continued support of the project to provide Metafind for libraries that allowed for research searches across all four university campuses and to continue developing the rural database. (*initiated*)
- BizFind – contracted with the JD Edwards Design Studio project to develop the concept and design a web-based tool to facilitate business transition. (*initiated*)
- Recorded presentations on rural economic development and duplicated and distributed to rural Nebraska communities. (*initiated*)
- NBDC at the University of Nebraska-Kearney – provided funding support for a Federal Procurement Office, aimed to help rural businesses secure government contracts. (*cooperated*)
- EDGE Support – provided 12-month funding for the EDGE Director. NebraskaEDGE aims to assist small business owners and their partners to start and improve their businesses. (*cooperated*)

- Supported development for “Ask an Economist” page to allow people to e-mail questions to an agricultural economist. (*cooperated*)
- Program support given to the Public Policy Center to support two projects: Community Development Block Grant study and the Small Town Success Policy Seminar. (*cooperated*)
- NU Skills/ WEBEX – provided financial support for the Communications and Information Technology (CIT) program to enhance the delivery of information and facilitate meetings virtually. (*cooperated*)

2005

- Communities of the Future – seven UNL Extension Educators were funded and allowed to focus 100% of their time on community and economic development. (*initiated*)
- Intern Program – twelve undergraduate students were placed in rural communities or regions across the state for a ten-week period to provide support for various community and economic development projects. (*initiated*)
- BizFind – continued to work with the JD Edwards Design Studio team to develop the web-based tool to facilitate business transition. (*initiated*)
- Dialogues Across Nebraska (DAN) – developed curricula and the model for a student leadership program with the goal to help rural communities bridge generational gaps in communication by conducting intergenerational dialogues on community-based issues. Four interns were funded throughout the summer to organize and conduct dialogues. (*initiated*)
- Nebraska Horizons – engaged two advisors, two consultants, and 14 Nebraskans statewide from a variety of backgrounds to participate in a year-long scanning process of their preferred readings to assist the Rural Initiative in identifying relevant trends for the future of rural Nebraska. (*initiated*)
- Funding support was given to the agricultural economics department to match a grant that provided scholarships to four Women in Agriculture. (*cooperated*)
- Supported and hosted meetings of the Nebraska Legislature who were part of the LR 105 Rural Development Interim Study. (*cooperated*)
- Sponsored the NBDC Business Development Conference – Wayne State College. (*cooperated*)
- NU Skills/ WEBEX – provided continued financial support for the Communications and Information Technology (CIT) program to enhance the delivery of information and facilitate meetings virtually. (*cooperated*)

- NBDC at the University of Nebraska-Kearney – provided funding support for a Federal Procurement Office, aimed to help rural businesses secure government contracts. *(cooperated)*

2006

- Communities of the Future – while some of the UNL Extension Educators who were part of this team reverted back to the Extension payroll, four continued to be funded by the Rural Initiative and to focus 100% of their time on community and economic development. *(initiated)*
- MarketPlace Nebraska — sponsored the keynote speaker on the Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club that has led to the organization and startup of at least three clubs in Nebraska. *(initiated)*
- “Farm Real Estate Ownership Transfer Patterns in Nebraska’s Panhandle Region” – funded this study conducted by Bruce Johnson, Dennis Conley and a graduate student. *(initiated)*
- Nebraska MarketMaker – coordinated and funded the development of this interactive web-based database designed to connect Nebraska’s value-added food producers, distributors, buyers and sellers to their specific consumer markets. *(initiated)*
- Red Carpet Service – developed curricula and delivered Red Carpet Service training to service industries across rural Nebraska. Provide fulltime funding to one Extension Educator to conduct trainings across the state. *(initiated)*
- Dialogues Across Nebraska (DAN) – developed curricula and the model for a student leadership program with the goal to help rural communities bridge generational gaps in communication by conducting intergenerational dialogues on community-based issues. Four interns were funded throughout the summer to organize and conduct dialogues. *(initiated)*
- Consumer Preference Studies – funded one Extension Educator to conduct these studies that helped local businesses learn how to stop consumer spending leakage. *(cooperated)*
- Intern Program – three undergraduate students were placed in rural communities or regions across the state for a ten-week period to provide support for various community and economic development projects. *(initiated)*
- Nebraska Horizons – engaged two advisors, two consultants, and 14 Nebraskans statewide from a variety of backgrounds to participate in a year-long scanning process of their preferred readings to assist the Rural Initiative in identifying relevant trends for the future of rural Nebraska. *(initiated)*
- Water Outreach Coordinator – created and supported the Water Outreach Coordinator position at the UNL Water Center to facilitate transmission of water research at the University of Nebraska to state and local policy makers. *(initiated)*

- ‘Community of Scholars’ funding – six research projects were funded: (*initiated*)
 - Investigating Opportunities for Rural Development through Bird-friendly Farms
 - Ron Johnson, UNL School of Natural Resources
 - Understanding the Work Lives of Nebraska’s Rural Middle Level Mathematics Teachers
 - Ruth Heaton, UNL Teaching, Learning & Teacher Education
 - Technology as a Medium for Delivering Mental Health Treatments to Rural Underserved
 - Richard Bischoff, UNL Family and Consumer Sciences
 - Rethinking School Markets, Student Marginalization and Rural Community Survival
 - Stephen Swidler, UNL Teaching, Learning & Teacher Education
 - Great Plains Nature Tourism: Trends and Opportunities
 - Anita Lorentzen, UNK Teacher Education
 - Rural Depression Treatment
 - David Robinson, UNMC
- LeadershipPlenty – program funding and travel support was provided for this Extension program. (*cooperated*)
- NU Skills/ WEBEX – provided continued financial support for the Communications and Information Technology (CIT) program to enhance the delivery of information and facilitate meetings virtually. (*cooperated*)
- Provided funding support and booth display at the Governor’s Agro-Tourism Conference. (*cooperated*)
- EDGE Support – provided six-month salary support for the EDGE Director. NebraskaEDGE aims to assist small business owners and their partners to start and improve their businesses. (*cooperated*)
- NBDC at the University of Nebraska-Kearney – provided funding support for a Federal Procurement Office, aimed to help rural businesses secure government contracts. (*cooperated*)

2007

- Nebraska MarketMaker – coordinated and funded the development of an interactive web-based database designed to connect Nebraska’s value-added food producers, distributors, buyers and sellers to their specific consumer markets [<http://marketmaker.nebraska.edu>]. (*initiated*)
- Broadband Study – provided summer salary funding for Byrav Ramamurthy and a graduate student to investigate the potential of new technologies for improved broadband speed and access in rural areas. (*initiated*)

- Community Assessment Training – sponsored training in two locations within the state in partnership with the USDA RC&Ds. (*initiated*)
- Water Outreach Coordinator – continued funding of this position in the UNL Water Center. Legislative briefings, print materials, and a website on water research relevant to policy makers by legislative district was created [<http://watercenter.unl.edu/WRRI/Districts/districts.asp>]. (*initiated*)
- Pillars of Growth – initiated and supported this study to look at Nebraska’s economic opportunities. Study conducted by Eric Thompson, Bruce Johnson, Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Chris Decker and Ernie Goss [<http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu/includes/downloads/pillarsofgrowth.pdf>]. (*initiated*)
- Miller Hall Conference Room – developed and made available a polycom unit and conference room for faculty to expand the rural outreach via distance. (*initiated*)
- Updated the Nebraska Rural Initiative website with complete database and matrix of rural development organizations [<http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu/includes/downloads/matrixminusfunding08.pdf>]. (*initiated*)
- Red Carpet Service – continued support of the Red Carpet Service training to service industries across rural Nebraska. Provide fulltime funding to one Extension Educator to conduct trainings across the state [ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu/development/tourism/red_carpet.html]. (*initiated*)
- Nebraska Agriculture Water Management Demonstration Network – provided support to Suat Irmak to expand his research to save water energy in irrigation projects in more locations in Nebraska. (*initiated*)
- Created a new Rural Initiative faculty position – Coordinator of Rural Economic Development. (*initiated*)
- Miller Hall remodeling job – renovation of new office space for the Rural Initiative and the Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI) to combine into the same office space. (*initiated/cooperated*)
- Co-Sponsored the Grassland and Sustainable Communities Workshop (*cooperated*) and convened a group to work on a wildlife and conservation-based tourism plan. (*initiated*)
- EDGE Support – provided six-month salary support for the EDGE Director. NebraskaEDGE aims to assist small business owners and their partners to start and improve their businesses. Provided support for 10 faculty members at NCTA to take the EDGE training and incorporate entrepreneurship principles in their classes. (*cooperated*)
- Retree Nebraska – one of the four funding departments for Retree Nebraska (along with Nebraska Forest Service, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, and Agronomy and Horticulture) to match grant funds received from the U.S. Forest Service in order to insure involvement of rural communities. (*cooperated*)

- NBDC at the University of Nebraska-Kearney – provided funding support for a Federal Procurement Office, aimed to help rural businesses secure government contracts. *(cooperated)*
- Organized a multi-disciplinary group of faculty and developed a white paper in collaboration with the UNL Center for Energy Sciences Research: “Analysis, Decisionmaking Tools, and Outreach for a Sustainable Energy Future in Nebraska.” *(led and facilitated)*
- Governor’s Agri-Tourism Conference – provided funding and support. *(cooperated)*
- IT Project with UNO, College of Information, Science and Technology – collaboration on an information technology project to provide educational programming to meet the IT needs of microenterprise businesses in rural Nebraska. *(cooperated)*

2008

- Nebraska MarketMaker – coordinated and funded the development of this interactive web-based database designed to connect Nebraska’s value-added food producers, distributors, buyers and sellers to their specific consumer markets. *(initiated)*
- Sponsored and cooperated with Extension to organize an eight-state rural economic conference in Rapid City, South Dakota. *(initiated)*
- Water Outreach Coordinator – partnered with Extension and the Water Center to continue funding the water outreach coordinator position. *(initiated)*
- Water Resources Advisory Panel (WRAP) – supported a research project by Durelle Scott, John Lenters, and Erkan Istanbuluoglu: “Impact of Riparian Vegetation on the Budget with a Watershed Scale Model.” *(initiated)*
- ReTree Nebraska – continue to support this collaborative project that encourages the proper selection, planting, and maintenance of one million trees in Nebraska to replace the diminishing tree canopy in communities and areas across the state. *(initiated/cooperated)*
- Supported Walt Stroup in the development of curricula that utilizes statistical tools and statistical thinking to assist rural decision makers. *(initiated)*
- Specialty Crop Block Grant – received funding from the State Department of Agriculture; conducted a local foods phone survey to gather information on current trends and problems within the marketing realm. *(initiated)*
- Local Foods Network – brought together a collaboration of campus departments and other regional groups across the state to establish a statewide local foods system in Nebraska. *(initiated)*
- Erected a high tunnel greenhouse at the West Central Research and Extension Center to demonstrate feasibility of extending the growing season and organic and other high value crops. Supported a graduate student to help develop curricula for these purposes. *(initiated)*

- Using HUD funds, acquired new equipment for the processing of organic grains and other foods for the Food Processing Center. *(initiated)*
- Filley Hall Business Center – engaged support to assist with accounting and personnel support. *(initiated)*
- Red Carpet Service – continued support of the Red Carpet Service training to service industries across rural Nebraska. Provide fulltime funding to one Extension Educator to conduct trainings across the state. *(initiated)*
- NBDC at the University of Nebraska-Kearney – provided funding support for a Federal Procurement Office, aimed to help rural businesses secure government contracts. *(cooperated)*
- Governor’s Agri-Tourism Conference – provided funding and support. *(cooperated)*
- Provided research and grant writing support to Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel and Joe Atwood for for small- and medium-sized farms and ranches. *(cooperated)*
- Provide funding support to the Food Processing Center to support research of new foods (particularly snack foods that utilize Nebraska products). *(cooperated)*
- Partnered with Grassland Foundation on Tourism and Rural Development Speaker. *(cooperated)*



Plans & Outcomes



► Assessment Plan:

The Rural Initiative's assessment plan is driven by its mission and broad goals. (See Page 21.) During an internal planning session the Rural Initiative staff developed a statement of values and guidelines that supplement our mission and goals and are used to make decisions about our work. (See Page 22.)

The key questions of any assessment plan are: What are we trying to do? How well are we doing it? How do we know? How do we use the information to improve? And how do we know the changes worked?

The Rural Initiative participated in a series of listening sessions across the state in 2003 and continues to learn about the needs of rural Nebraskans through a variety of other assessment tools. To further broaden our perspective we organized the Nebraska Horizons Scanning Project that engaged two advisors, two consultants and 14 Nebraskans drawn from a statewide sample who represented a wide variety of fields that included workforce development, water, agriculture, rural health, and economic development. The members of the scanning process fed information about current and future trends they spotted in their professional reading as well as local and regional contacts into a central point to assist us in constantly refocusing priorities based on local, state and national trends.

As another way to learn about the needs of rural Nebraskans, rural food producers were surveyed about their needs relating to their food business, and this same group of Nebraskans were surveyed about their use of and need for increased access to or education in using technology to improve their businesses. We partially support and participate in the development of questions associated with the annual Rural Poll. Rather than use one large steering committee, we believe the diversity of rural Nebraskans, both

geographically and demographically, requires that we convene smaller groups tailored to particular goals or programming for guidance. A most recent example is a group we have convened on Producing and Marketing Local Foods.

The assessment cycle for the Rural Initiative is continuous, using data such as number of communities or individuals served, external funds generated, and number of faculty and students engaged in research or outreach applicable to rural residents. We also aspire to educate faculty about rural issues and advocate for added capacity to fill identified gaps in the University's ability to meet the needs of rural areas. Identifying partners and engaging those partners to fill those gaps is also an important strategy that is intended to avoid duplication of effort. We set specific objectives annually and evaluate our success annually as a part of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Unit Planning Sessions. Examples of this reporting follows below in the *Outcomes* section.

Outcomes:

An annual report of outcomes is submitted to the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The report for 2007 is shown below. Summaries for 2006 and 2005 follow this report. Additional information about outcomes is included in the *Successes and Impacts* section beginning on Page 53 as well as the *External Funding* section (Page 17) and the *Timeline* section (Page 27).

University of Nebraska Rural Initiative
Unit Planning Session
January 24, 2008

Annual Report of Rural Initiative Accomplishments for 2007

2007 Goals, Accomplishments and Impacts

Goal I. Rural entrepreneurs, including farms and ranchers, seeking to diversify their operations, will utilize tools and develop skills in marketing and technology to expand their businesses. (Outreach/Strategic Plan Issue addressed: Rural Economic Opportunities)

A. Complete a survey of MarketMaker subscribers to determine their needs for internet access and education and increase subscribers.

- Surveys were sent to 817 potential respondents with 166 returned. The survey was completed end of March 2007 and provided new information about the educational and technology needs of MarketMaker subscribers. Insights were gained to determine more effective ways to disseminate information to producers to increase their access to new markets and to increase access to local foods for consumers.
- A podcast describing MarketMaker was created and posted on the RI website in both English and Spanish. The number of subscribers to MarketMaker increased by nearly 20% in 2007 up from 829 in fall of 2006 when the site was launched to 996 producers at the end of 2007.

Impacts: New specialty crop funds (\$26,034) were obtained from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture to assist growers with marketing specialty crops. The website sustained an average of 7,500 hits per month in 2007. Trends in local food and organic and specialty food demand continue to grow, and MarketMaker is a good tool to help meet consumer demand. The MarketMaker network continues to grow and now includes 10 states with another seven pending completion of contract agreements. Expansion of the network expands potential markets for Nebraska growers beyond Nebraska borders. GROW Nebraska contacted the RI as a source of expertise on a proposal they wished to submit to expand markets for natural foods. The proposal was successful and will further MarketMaker's visibility. MarketMaker was one of the presentations featured at Congressman Fortenberry's conference on local foods. Finally, a proposal for a second round of funding for the Nebraska Department of Agriculture funding will be submitted.

B. Review the status of rural broadband in Nebraska and of emerging technologies that may offer alternative solutions for rural broadband access. Submit at least one proposal for external funding in partnership with Computer Science and Engineering (CSE).

- A survey of availability, costs and knowledge about using the Internet for business purposes was included as a part of the MarketMaker survey. We learned the range of technologies used by this sample to access Internet included 33.3% dial-up, 35.7% DSL, 2.4% cable, 1.3% wireless, and 6.3% satellite. 74% of the respondents were unable to report their Internet connection speed using a URL supplied with the survey.
- A proposal was submitted in August to the National Science Foundation by Dr. Byrav Ramamurthy in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) as a part of his work with the Rural Initiative. If funded, the proposal will study the capability of wireless mesh network nodes to provide broadband access to rural populations. He proposes to investigate the use of wireless mesh routers in a lab and campus setting and study their suitability for test bed deployment in a rural county in Nebraska.
- A Masters candidate in Computer Science and Engineering wrote his paper on rural broadband as a result of working with Dr. Ramamurthy and the Rural Initiative.
- The Rural Initiative built a relationship with UNO's College of Information Science and Technology and organized a focus group in Lyons, Nebraska to assist Dr. Sadjia Quershi and colleagues with better understanding the IT needs of rural microbusinesses.

Impacts: Dr. Ramamurthy has developed his interest in rural broadband issues and continues to seek external funds related to this area beyond those mentioned above. He has indicated his intention to seek an NU NRI grant.

The broadband questionnaire suggests that more information is needed to fully understand access and cost issues for rural residents who wish to use the internet for microbusinesses. To acquire that knowledge will be prohibitively expensive, and such an effort would not be welcomed by the telephone industry nor supported by the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission issued a press release in December 2007 citing a FCC report that ranked Nebraska's availability of digital subscriber line (DSL) high speed Internet service through local incumbent telephone companies second in the nation. (Georgia was first.) In its findings, the FCC found that Nebraska had a DSL saturation of 89% availability where incumbent local telephone companies operate. The PSC Broadband Survey reported 94% of

Nebraska's 577 population centers have broadband access to the Internet. While concerns about cost and access continue to be reported, Nebraska has made some progress. The advocacy of needs both by the Rural Initiative and other units such as Extension no doubt has helped move Nebraska ahead. While there continue to be problems depending upon location and population density, this does not appear to be an area where the University would be able to affect current investment patterns or policy to address those issues.

The survey indicated that an increased understanding of how to use the internet for business purposes is needed in rural areas. However, a more in-depth understanding of those needs is required, and they will vary by region. The Rural Initiative connected the Extension Technology Team with Dr. Ramamurthy and also with the UNO effort that provides new sources of expertise to that team and may lead to future collaborations. Based on the focus group, UNO/CIST is pursuing external or earmark funding to provide education and technical assistance to microbusinesses. The investigations by the CSE faculty and graduate student suggested other approaches such as optical fiber, free space optics, and wireless mesh networking may have potential. Connections were made between UNL faculty and the University of Wisconsin to explore further collaborations. Explorations into Nebraska's current legal framework governing internet providers suggest that without statutory changes, the ability of the University to improve the status of Internet connectivity using these new technologies is limited. If Dr. Ramamurthy's proposal is funded, we will seek partnership opportunities with those entities authorized to provide Internet service in Nebraska who may be interested in new technologies.

C. Evaluate all entrepreneurship support programs funded by the Rural Initiative.

- Surveys were conducted to measure the effectiveness of the Red Carpet Service. Available data and anecdotal information were used to review the Rural Procurement Service at UNK's NBDC office, support for EDGE training of Curtis faculty, and Bizfind.

Outcomes and Impacts: Participants in the Red Carpet Service survey (an educational program that helps community businesses and their employees learn to promote regional tourism) showed an average 36.5% increase in knowledge, understanding and ability to meet visitor needs. The evaluation indicated that 24% of participants had shared information gained in the class with 9 or more people, 29% had shared with 5-8 people, and 37% had shared with 1-4 people. The pretest/post test data showed a number of other changes with the most significant being: 54% reported increased ability to "share information about hidden treasures" in their area, 52% reported increased knowledge of the main attractions and "hidden treasures" in their area, and 44% indicated increased knowledge of the locations of additional local tourism resources. Knowledge learned from the survey is being used in curriculum updates, and course structure was altered. RI will continue funding this effort.

Outcomes and Impacts: The Rural Initiative provides partial support to the Procurement Technical Assistance Office located at UNK. Impact: The office reported providing 512 counseling sessions to 92 distinct clients between December 1, 2006 and November 27, 2007. Clients served from this office reported over \$17 million in contract awards between December 1, 2006 and November 27, 2007. NBDC-PTAC data indicated each \$1 of Rural Initiative support resulted in \$514 in contracts for rural Nebraska businesses. Since the opening of this office in 2004 there have been 162 distinct clients served with 1,217 counseling sessions. Clients were served in 49 Nebraska

communities in 43 counties and contractors reported awards of \$38,254,071. The Rural Initiative continued to fund this activity for calendar year 2008.

Outcomes and Impacts: The Rural Initiative supported nine members of the NCTA-Curtis faculty in completing an Enhancing Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs (EDGE) class to increase entrepreneurship education in the classroom. As part of his faculty visitations, Dr. Sleight, Dean of NCTA, observed each faculty member who completed the course and used as one of his criteria the entrepreneurship principles taught during the class session. Dr. Sleight reported his faculty has demonstrated successful knowledge transfer. As one example, he cited a faculty member who was able to help a young man develop a plan for using Holstein heifer embryo transplants into sound “grandma cows” that will sell for three times the revenue realized from a beef calf. The program was determined worthy of continued support. Dr. Sleight requested support for additional faculty to take an EDGE class and the Rural Initiative agreed. Not enough people signed up for the class for it to make during the spring of 2008.

Outcomes and Impacts: Bizfind is a software program developed by J. D. Edwards students and supported by the Rural Initiative and the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) office at UNK. Its purpose was primarily to assist business owners in locating buyers for established businesses when they are ready to transition that business. Student innovations expanded the functions to allow communities to use the site to sell themselves to entrepreneurs who were looking for a business location. A variety of efforts have been made to market this service since its introduction with limited success. It was met with initial enthusiasm by various communities but has never been able to meet the targets set out in the original business plan. Even after alterations and offers of free initial service, communities did not utilize the site by updating their data. We learned that this is a problem with sites hosted by NPPD and the State of Nebraska as well. There is also a need to update the site code based upon discovery of small quirks that were not addressed by students or others. This updating could also be quite expensive. After reviewing the costs of updating and promoting the site the Directors involved determined the costs outweighed the potential benefits of any further investment.

D. In cooperation with Extension, the Rural Initiative’s Extension Educator delivered Red Carpet Service training in four Nebraska locations and three in South Dakota reaching 198 participants. The curriculum was revised and a web-based audio/video overview was developed and posted on the Rural Initiative website (<http://redcarpetservice.nebraska.edu>). The Rural Initiative Extension Educator provided ongoing consultation to the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway Association and Byway Interpretive Center planners. Research on the challenges and rewards of operating a bed and breakfast was initiated and 14 innkeepers have been interviewed to date. Rural Initiative staff also participated in the state Agri/Ecotourism Conference.

Impact: In addition to teaching cited above, “Red Carpet Service: Linking Rural Communities Travelers and Tourists” was accepted for publication by the Journal of Extension. New curricula are being developed to teach business owners and managers along Nebraska’s scenic byways how to capitalize on potential tourism dollars through effective marketing. Connections have begun to be made with the new hospitality and tourism faculty. Red Carpet continues to receive coverage in local news outlets.

Goal 2. University of Nebraska students will develop skills that prepare them to be the next generation of community leaders. (Outreach/Strategic Plan Issue addressed: Strengthen the quality of life of individuals and families and contribute to community vitality.)

A. Complete curriculum for “Dialogues Across Nebraska” and pilot in six new communities.

- Curricula for the piloted “Dialogues Across Nebraska” community intergenerational dialogue conducted by University students was completed. A loss of personnel limited expansion of the program.

B. Increase faculty engagement in “Dialogues Across Nebraska” and add external partners who will provide cash or in-kind support.

- Interest was expressed by both AgLEEC and the School of Natural Resources in using the process as well as some outside the University. Curriculum and other materials were turned over to the AgLEEC for integration into their programs.
- There appeared to be potential for external partners and possible financial support. It will likely require some time for transition into AgLEEC before any decision is made about the priority of this effort.

Impacts: The “Dialogues Across Nebraska” program was well received by participating communities, and students who participated developed an understanding of community organization and group skills. The Chair of AgLEEC reports that the department will use the materials developed. Moving the program into an academic department will enable better institutionalization of such programming because of easier availability of students to participate.

C. Other:

- Summer support for graduate students in horticulture and computer science as well as for a student employee in the office who primarily worked on tourism and local foods issues. The horticulture student helped move the ReTree Program ahead during the summer and has expressed interest in a career in Extension work. A paper on rural broadband was developed by the computer science student. With no previous exposure to rural issues, he has now developed an awareness and level of concern about rural access issues and ideas for bridging rural and urban issues. The student office worker made a decision to attend graduate school and is enrolled in the AgLEEC department with a minor in tourism.
- Support was provided for an Ag Econ graduate student to develop work in the area of rural competitiveness that will be relevant to rural Nebraska. Final product is not complete yet.
- A discussion was initiated with undergraduates from rural communities from across the state to learn their attitudes about the future of those communities and explore possible student interest in engagement with their communities while at the University. With one exception, students expressed a deep attachment to their communities but saw little opportunity for college graduates to return. While expressing concerns about the future of their communities, none expressed interest in devoting time to engaging with their communities while a student.

Goal 3. Rural Nebraskans will use applied research and other information to engage with one another and University expertise for purposes of proactively planning for the future and developing a sustainable social, economic and natural environment. (Outreach/ Strategic Plan Issue addressed: Rural Economic Opportunity.)

A. Co-sponsor a conference with the Center for Energy Sciences, Ag Econ and RUPRI on social, economic and environmental impacts of biofuels.

- Collaborated with the Center for Energy Sciences to lead a focus area of a group of faculty who convened at the Interdisciplinary Retreat in Nebraska City. Following the initial event, the Rural Initiative continued to convene participating faculty and recruited additional faculty to expand the breadth of the group's expertise. Agricultural Economics and Extension were two IANR units brought into this process. A proposal (Analysis, Decision-making Tools and Outreach for a Sustainable Energy Future in Nebraska) was written by RI's Director and the Program Manager at the Center for Energy Sciences for consideration by the Vice Chancellor of Research as one area for future funding in energy sciences. After initial meetings outlined above, a decision was made by the Energy Center and RI that a large conference in this area was premature. Awareness of the need for more analysis of the social, economic and environmental impacts of renewable fuels development, particularly on communities, was increased.

Impacts: The Rural Initiative was invited to participate in the development of an Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT) proposal, and faculty collaborations around the social, economic and environmental impacts of biofuels increased. It is anticipated additional proposals will be developed from these initial collaborations.

B. Disseminate previously unpublished research sponsored by the Rural Initiative.

- A variety of new material was produced and published by the Water Outreach Associate (funded by the Rural Initiative and housed in the Water Center) to make University water research more accessible to state legislators and other decision makers. Materials are posted on both the RI and Water Center websites.
- Six reports on the results of the Rural Poll were partially supported by the Rural Initiative.
- Presentations from the USDA-NRI "Buffalo Commons" grant were made at the Rural Institute, at the Rural Sociological Society, and for extension educators.
- A paper on "Labor Force Implications of Population Decline in Non-metropolitan Nebraska" was produced in partnership with the Bureau of Business Research and disseminated via the website and BBR's newsletter.
- Five original economic and demographic profiles (for West Point and Cuming County, Hebron and Thayer County, David City and Butler County, McCook and Red Willow County, Harlan and Furnas County) were prepared and presented to assist with community and regional development.
- A report on the Western Nebraska visitors survey was completed and provided to an extension educator for presentation to the Western Nebraska Tourism Coalition.
- An economic and demographic profile of Howard County was completed under a small contract for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Dissemination is directed by the Office of Rural Health.
- An economic and demographic profile of Scotts Bluff County was completed and made available to the State Senator from that district.

Impacts: Reports on business conditions, tourism, water and economic and demographic profiles contribute to the knowledge base available to communities and the state in planning and grant

writing efforts. The tourism reports provide insight into how to obtain income from visitors through marketing and customer relations.

The water research material has been well received by decision makers and has been singled out for favorable recognition by the Chair of the Nebraska Unicameral Natural Resources Committee. This work served to illustrate to policy makers the depth and breadth of the water research going on in the University. When the person filling this position resigned, the decision was made that Water Outreach Associate is an important position to continue.

The preliminary results from the “Buffalo Commons” USDA grant have generated a large amount of interest and inquiries about future work. The *Nebraska Farmer* made this work the subject of an article in 2007. A new project has been funded by USDANRI to build upon this initial work and will include partners from outside Nebraska.

C. Complete an analysis of the feasibility of developing a rural academy during 2007-2008 to serve the needs of local community leaders and volunteers for knowledge related to future challenges.

- A variety of meetings and conversations engaged faculty from IANR with a state senator who has interest in developing a new model of a rural leadership academy.
- Conversations with a variety of individuals around the country were conducted to discuss their experience and knowledge of activity and expertise relevant to this topic.
- The Rural Initiative engaged in discussions with Extension Educators who are developing training for the Nebraska Association of County Officials.
- Conversations with selected rural residents were used to determine need and interest in leadership education. Research on existing leadership programs in Nebraska was conducted.
- Enlisted the help of a UNL research librarian to research rural programming nationally and internationally.
- The head of UNL’s Gallup Leadership Institute, faculty in Public Administration in UNO’s College of Public Affairs and Community Service and both the former and current Chairs of IANR’s AgLEC department were engaged in discussions to evaluate the feasibility of developing such a Rural Academy. It was learned the UNO Public Administration was developing training for public officials. The Gallup Institute had been contacted about developing a new leadership model for Lincoln and Omaha but had not had time to develop it.
- During the 2007 IANR strategic planning sessions, the Chair of Statistics indicated interest and experience in helping the public use data and analysis to make decisions. Part of his time was bought out by the Rural Initiative and he was engaged in meetings and discussions as well as background work toward this effort. During the spring of 2008 he will develop curricula that is intended to be useful for extension educators and others doing community development work. The intention is to pilot curricula that will be useful in assisting local leaders with decision making processes and in interpreting the barrage of data they receive.

Impacts: The determination was made that the concept of a new leadership academy exceeds the current capacity of the various units and faculty available within the system. There was also a concern that another leadership training effort would not find a niche given the variety of other activities related to leadership training that exist. A collaboration of the various groups would provide a rich array of expertise to continue to plan for meeting possible future opportunities. However, no collaboration among the various groups could be arranged given their current workloads and areas of interest. The pilot curricula are intended to support existing leadership education outreach activities rather than attempt to create another that might compete with those still in the early development stages.

D. Other:

- Application to receive HUD funding for rural enterprise development in the areas of horticulture and food processing was successfully submitted.

Impact: New funds were made available to the Food Processing Center for equipment purchases. A demonstration high tunnel greenhouse will be available for teaching and research at North Platte's Research and Extension Center in 2008. The Department of Agronomy and Horticulture plans new educational offerings to use this facility. Planning for the use of remaining funds will continue.

- The Rural Initiative was one of four IANR partners who initiated the new ReTree Nebraska Program.

Impact: The ReTree Nebraska program got off to a good start with excellent news coverage in the Omaha World Herald and numerous local media outlets. Training programs have been conducted and new partners have been engaged. The team continues to work together to achieve its goal of one million trees planted in Nebraska communities in the next ten years. External funding to support a coordinator was received by the Nebraska Forest Service and the Rural Initiative has committed match to insure rural communities benefit from this funding.

- A new position, Coordinator of Rural Economic Development, was added to the Rural Initiative.

Impact: Expands the Rural Initiative's capacity, particularly in the area of agricultural development and with related constituencies. Brings background in Agricultural Economics along with actual farming experience. Also brings good knowledge of the Land Grant system from participation on a variety of advisory groups. This individual has initiated efforts to increase collaboration among faculty working in the area of economic impact of invasive species management and characteristics of sustainable small- and medium-size farms.

- The Rural Initiative provided funding for equipment to allow Dr. Suat Irmak (Biological Systems Engineering) to expand the area and number of producers who benefit from his research and education in agricultural water management. Research-based information is provided to Nebraskans to help them make better informed water management decisions and establish on-farm water status to achieve effective irrigation management to reduce water and energy consumption.

Impact: Final report is not yet available.

- The Rural Initiative funded the first year of the proposal “Impact of Riparian Vegetation on the Budget with a Watershed Scale Model” (Scott, et al). This was the top-ranked state water research priority of the Water Resources Advisory Panel.

Impact: The research enabled the Water Outreach Associate to respond to legislative inquiries and demonstrate University engagement in an issue of key importance to the Natural Resources committee among others. Two proposals have been written to continue this research with one being written in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

- The Rural Initiative convened science faculty doing economic, policy and legal analysis of water issues to collaborate on various aspects of environmental and economic impacts of invasive species treatment in a riparian zone. The objective was the submission of an NRI proposal to USDA.

Impact: Faculty that had not worked with one another before were brought together. It is anticipated such collaborations will lead to new external funding proposals. A member of the Ag Econ faculty and a graduate student continue to work on this effort.

- Working with a visiting scholar at the Center for Great Plains Studies, faculty were identified and convened to support a project examining the viability and sustainability of small and medium sized family farms.

Impact: A USDA NRI proposal is expected to be submitted in 2008.

- In partnership with the Grasslands Foundation, the Center for Great Plains Studies and others co-sponsored a talk by Dr. Larry Swanson of the University of Montana “Can the Path be Altered? Salvaging and Renewing Rural Plains Communities.” This presentation received wide coverage across Nebraska. A DVD of the talk was produced by the Rural Initiative and distributed to interested faculty and members of the public. Following this presentation a group of University, state and nonprofit representatives interested in agritourism was convened to explore next steps.

Impact: Possible funding sources for tourism studies were identified. Background obtained in these meetings was useful in briefing new faculty in IANR interested in tourism development. A student who participated in this process shows interest in pursuing this topic and will enroll in graduate work.

Rural Initiative Unit Goals for 2008

Goal One: The Rural Initiative will encourage and participate fully in an external review of the Rural Initiative, its mission, strategies and practices in order to improve the impact of its efforts on the economic and quality of life of rural Nebraska.

Outcome: Recommendations from an external review committee will help refine the mission and direct future efforts of the Rural Initiative.

Depending on the outcome of the external review, initial goals of the Rural Initiative for 2008 are the following:

Goal Two: Individual Nebraskans will expand economic opportunities in rural Nebraska by building on research based information from the University of Nebraska.

Category: Outreach

Strategic Plan Issue Addressed: Enhance economic opportunity

Rural Entrepreneurship

1. Individuals and communities will learn how to take full advantage of tourism opportunities through the following education and research programs supported by the Rural Initiative.

A. Red Carpet – Connie Francis

Outcome: 4 additional communities will learn about the potential for tourism

B. Experiential tourism related bulletins and research – Lisa Pennisi

Outcome: 3 bulletins will be produced on developing and promoting a tourist based business.

C. Hospitality related business employee retention research - Robin DiPietro

Outcome: research will be conducted on the training and development needs of small lodging operations.

D. SE Nebraska tourism extension educator

Outcome: RI will continue discussions with UN extension on developing a position description for a tourism extension specialist for SE Nebraska.

2. Individuals and communities will take full advantage of opportunities through the following education and research programs supported by the Rural Initiative.

A. MarketMaker – Kim Peterson

Outcome: partner with other groups (NCDC, FPC, Ne Food Coop) to provide a unified marketing opportunity for specialty food entrepreneurs.

B. NBDC-UNK

Outcome: increase rural business opportunity to obtain federal procurement contracts.

C. NCTA-EDGE

Outcome: train 10 NCTA faculty in entrepreneurship to insert into student class curriculum.

3. Rural Nebraskans will explore value added and specialty crop opportunities enhancing rural economies throughout the state through the following research and extension programming sponsored by the Rural Initiative.

A. MarketMaker – Kim Peterson

Outcome: partner with other groups (Nebraska Cooperative Development Center (NCDC), Food Processing Center (FPC), Nebraska Food Coop) to provide a unified marketing opportunity for specialty food entrepreneurs.

B. FPC Specialty Crops - Rolando Flores

Outcomes: Identify high potential specialty crops for use in snack food industry.

C. Ext Educator for specialty crops budgets (possible funding participation)

Outcomes: Develop accurate crop budgets for high potential alternative crops

D. Horticulture greenhouse research on specialty crops - Kim Todd

Outcome: Through trial research develop programming for horticultural entrepreneurship in high tunnel structures.

- E. Tourism opportunities associated with valued added/specialty crop products (see above).
Outcome: Create information materials on tourism potential associated with specialty crop production from identified specialty crop opportunities.

Small- to Medium-Sized Farm Profitability

1. Small and medium sized farms will improve their profitability through research, educational programming and marketing exposure provided by the following Rural Initiative funded programs.
 - A. Ext Educator for specialty crops budgets (possible funding participation)
Outcomes: Develop accurate crop budgets for high potential alternative crops.
 - B. FPC Specialty Crops - Rolando Flores
Outcomes: Identify high potential specialty crops for use in snack food industry
 - C. Characteristics contributing to successful small/medium sized farms study - Cheryl Burkhart Kriesel and Joe Atwood
Outcome: Submit NRI grant to fund above study.
 - D. WRAP Water study related to invasive species
Outcomes: Enhance productivity by developing management tools to control invasive species in riparian zones.
 - E. Horticulture greenhouse research on specialty crops - Kim Todd
Outcome: Through trial research develop programming for horticultural entrepreneurship in high tunnel structures.
 - F. MarketMaker – Kim Peterson
Outcome: partner with other groups (NCDC, FPC, Ne Food Coop) to provide a unified marketing opportunity for specialty food entrepreneurs.

Goal Three: Nebraskan communities will take full advantage of their assets to grow their economies by building on research based information from the University of Nebraska.

Category: Outreach

Strategic Plan Issue addressed: Enhance economic opportunity

Rural Development (RI will provide support for the following activities)

- A. Host an 8-State Extension Rural Development Meeting (NE, OK, KS, SD, ND, MT, CO, WY)
Outcomes: host 8-state community development extension specialist in a meeting to determine best practices for great plains agriculture dominant counties.
- B. Rural development related research - Randy Cantrell
Outcomes: develop publications based on Buffalo Commons NRI grant, develop 10 Nebraska rural county profiles
- C. NRI grant application (extension of Buffalo Commons grant) Cantrell, Johnson, Burkhart-Kriesel
Outcomes: USDA NRI grant submission on research relevant to rural Nebraska
- D. SE Nebraska tourism extension educator
Outcome: RI will continue discussions with UN extension on developing a position description for a tourism extension specialist for SE Nebraska.
- E. WRAP Water study related to invasive species
Outcomes: Enhance productivity by developing management tools to control invasive species in riparian zones.
- F. Six Sigma Strategy for rural decision-makers - Walt Stroup
Outcome: curriculum to teach rural public policymakers to use data based policy decision tools.

Goal Four: The Rural Initiative will work to build partnerships in order to create greater synergy in focusing the knowledge, skills and creativity of the University of Nebraska on enhancing the economy and quality of life in rural Nebraska.

1. Partnership: Enhancing student experiences by providing student research opportunities related to the development of rural Nebraska.

Category: Teaching

Strategic Plan Issue addressed: Enhance economic opportunity

- A. Rural Tourism - Lisa Pennissi - graduate student (Kayla Churchill).
- B. FPC Specialty Crops - Rolando Flores - graduate student.
- C. Experiential tourism - Lisa Pennissi - graduate student.
- D. Hospitality - Robin DiPietro - graduate student.
- E. Horticulture Greenhouses - Kim Todd - graduate student.
- F. Characteristics contributing to successful small/medium sized farms, Joe Atwood student.
- G. NCTA-EDGE (train faculty to teach entrepreneurship principles to students).

2. Partnership: The Rural Initiative will support UNL faculty to conduct research valuable to rural Nebraskans.

Category: Research

Strategic Plan Issue addressed: Enhance economic opportunity

- A. Rural development related research - Randy Cantrell.
- B. Characteristics contributing to successful small/medium sized farms study – Cheryl Burkhart Kriesel and Joe Atwood.
- C. NRI grant application (extension of Buffalo Commons grant) Cantrell, Johnson, Burkhart-Kriesel
- D. FPC Specialty Crops - Rolando Flores.
- E. Horticulture Greenhouses - Kim Todd.
- F. WRAP Water study related to invasive species.
- G. Identify and provide seed funding opportunities for applied research important to rural NE.

3. Partnership: Rural Nebraskans will benefit from greater collaboration among University units to optimize the limited resources available for rural development related research, education and outreach activities.

Category: Outreach & Research

Strategic Plan Issue addressed: Enhance economic opportunity

- A. WRAP Water study related to invasive species.
- B. Extension Educator for specialty crops budgets.
- C. SE Nebraska tourism extension educator.
- D. UN System Entrepreneurship Effort.
- E. Five State Extension Meeting.

Annual reports are also converted into brief documents highlighting Rural Initiative accomplishments to be distributed to faculty and interested public. The 2006 and 2005 “Highlights” reports follow.



2006 Nebraska Rural Initiative Highlights

The University of Nebraska Rural Initiative is a University-wide program that engages researchers, teaching faculty, Extension and University students in collaborating to provide knowledge, education and research that will increase rural Nebraska's ability to compete in the future. Current programming includes work in: research on business transition, assisting rural businesses in obtaining federal grants and contracts, agritourism and ecotourism, entrepreneurship, studying the rural economy and changing demographic patterns and land ownership patterns, rural broadband, youth leadership, and water education and outreach. We also maintain on our web page a comprehensive source of information about rural development programs at the University and in the State of Nebraska for use by Nebraska citizens, the Legislature, agencies and nonprofits to encourage partnerships and resource sharing across the various groups who work in rural development.

Over the last 50 years, global, technological, environmental and economic changes have greatly affected life in rural regions in Nebraska, across the United States and the world. Many of these changes have diminished the economic and social fabric of rural regions. Today is a time of opportunity for rural regions as the nation focuses upon developing renewable sources of energy, insuring a safe and healthy food supply, and protecting and managing water and other natural resources in the face of drought and other environmental challenges. The Rural Initiative provides a bridge between faculty housed in various departments and across campuses to see the big picture in order to generate and apply new knowledge. The Rural Initiative also serves as a link between University faculty and Nebraska communities, institutions and regions to realize future opportunities. We welcome your insights and suggestions on how we can be most effective in helping Nebraskans capitalize on this new era of opportunity.

Some of the 2006 accomplishments:

- ✓ The Rural Initiative proposed and funded the creation of a new position of Water Outreach Associate. This position is housed in the Water Center and facilitates the transfer of water research to decision-making bodies and other public groups.
- ✓ MarketMaker is an interactive website designed to connect Nebraska's value-added food producers with consumer markets. Launched during the 2006 State Fair and Husker Harvest Days, the site has received positive response from food producers and consumers and was featured in *The Nebraska Farmer's* November issue and in several daily and weekly newspapers. Nearly 1000 food producers are now included in the database and the site is expected to increase the profits of food entrepreneurs in Nebraska. Visit the website at marketmaker.nebraska.edu.
- ✓ The 'Red Carpet Service' training, developed by Rural Initiative staff to enhance rural tourism was delivered to 176 participants in 7 communities. 2,500 copies of the 'Service Sells' DVDs were distributed. A Western Nebraska visitor's survey was completed for use by communities working to increase tourism.
- ✓ Rural Initiative staff participated in the development of the annual Rural Poll and funding was provided to support the EDGE entrepreneurship courses and the Rural Federal Procurement program.
- ✓ A student-led community development process, *Dialogues Across Nebraska* (DAN), engaged undergraduates with high school students and community volunteers in 24 Nebraska communities and one county. Participating communities identified priorities for future development and received a report from the University student team summarizing conclusions and data. Some communities reported an increased level of community volunteerism as a result of the dialogues.

- ✓ A major focus of 2006 has been to expand the number of faculty and graduate students in applied research that enhances Nebraska's understanding of key issues confronting rural communities and regions. The following reports and studies are either complete or nearing completion and will be made available to you upon request:
 - *Big Box Stores: Their Impacts on the Economy and Tips for Competing*, by Sean Golden, Noel Jeutang, Ratikanta Pattaik, Dr. David Rosenbaum, and Dr. Eric Thompson, June 2006. This report was generated at the request of a group of Nebraska business people who expressed concern about the impact of big box stores on the viability of small business, particularly grocers. The report addresses the general impact of Wal-Mart and big box stores on the economy; an empirical look at Wal-Mart's impacts on 15 Nebraska communities; and reviews research on ways that local retailers can compete against big box stores.
 - *Pillars of Growth in Nebraska's Non-Metropolitan Economy*, by Dr. Ernie Goss (Creighton), Dr. Chris Decker (UNO), Dr. Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel (UNL Panhandle Research and Extension Center), Dr. Bruce A. Johnson (UNL), and Dr. Eric C. Thompson (UNL). This report was prepared to respond to requests for information about industries driving the rural Nebraska economy today. The report describes Nebraska's rural economy by breaking it out into nine regions. This work has been shared with members of the Legislature and will be presented at the request of groups throughout the nine regions. The Director of graduate studies in Ag Econ has stated this material will serve as a useful tool for graduate students who are not from Nebraska but who are interested in finding research topics relevant to Nebraska for their dissertations. Additional analysis useful to the future competitiveness of Nebraska will grow out of this work.
 - Other studies nearing completion include:
 - *Buying Patterns of Nebraska Farm Real Estate: A Sub-State Regional Analysis*, by Dr. Bruce Johnson, Dr. Dennis Conley and Patrick Krepel (all UNL).
 - *Investigating Opportunities for Rural Development through Bird-friendly Farms and Agricultural/Nature Tourism Opportunities*, by Dr. Ron Johnson, Dr. Jim Brandle, Dr. Erin Blankenship and Marcy Wieser (all UNL).
 - *Understanding the Work Lives of Nebraska's Rural Middle Level Mathematics Teachers*, by Dr. Ruth Heaton (UNL).
 - *Technology as a Medium for Delivering Mental Health Treatments to Rural Underserved Populations*, by Dr. Richard Bischoff (UNL).
 - *Finding a Place: Rethinking School Markets, Student Marginalization and Rural Community Survival*, by Dr. Stephen Swidler (UNL) and Matthew Blomstedt (Nebraska Unicameral).
 - *Great Plains Nature Tourism: Trends and Opportunities Case Study*, by Anita Lorentzen and Geraldine Stirtz (both UNK).
 - *Rural Depression Treatment*, by Dr. David Robinson, Dr. Elisabeth Backer, Dr. Jenenne Geske, Dr. Kimberly Jarzynka, and Dr. Michael Sitorius (all UNMC).
- ✓ Finally, a two-year research grant, entitled "Relocation to the Buffalo Commons" was obtained from the USDA's National Research Initiative to study patterns of in-migration to rural Nebraska. The Department of Agricultural Economics is a partner in this study.

Please visit our new website at <http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu> or call 402.472.2940 for more information on these and other programs. If you haven't checked our site in a while you will find new information on a variety of rural development programs in the state as well as other useful links for those interested in rural development. One frequently used section is a listing of rural development programs in Nebraska. Click on 'Rural Resources' and go to 'Rural Development Programs' to find this listing.



2005 Nebraska Rural Initiative Highlights

Rural Initiative receives federal appropriation:

The Transportation/Treasury HUD appropriations bill signed by the President in December contained two amounts totaling \$300,000 to support the work of the Rural Initiative in rural enterprise development in Nebraska. Next steps include contacts with the appropriate University and federal agency representatives in Washington to begin the planning process. Thank you to all five members of the Nebraska Congressional delegation for their work and support.

Rural Initiative worked with Legislature examining rural programs and issues:

The Rural Initiative hosted a series of meetings of the Legislative Task Force created by Legislative Resolution 105 to examine rural development programs and recommend the most effective way to deliver programs across the state. Thirteen senators and their staff produced recommendations which include continuing the task force during 2006 and sponsoring a conference on rural economic development. A statewide matrix of rural development programs, created by the Rural Initiative, was expanded by legislative staff research and the Rural Initiative was charged with maintaining this matrix on its Web site. Please visit our Web site at <http://ruralinitiative.unl.edu> for a printable copy of this matrix. The Rural Initiative is sponsoring a team of researchers in the preparation of a regional economic study to support the planned conference.

Dialogues Across Nebraska engages undergraduates in community leadership:

A new program in youth and community development was piloted during the summer of 2005. *Dialogues Across Nebraska* (DAN) is a community development process that engages citizens of a community in thinking about the future of their community while involving every generation in the process. Four undergraduates received training in organizing and conducting the dialogues and worked in Ainsworth, Burwell, Chappell, Crawford, Hay Springs, and Knox County. High school students were recruited to assist. In addition to receiving a compilation of community discussions and recommendations, each participating community develops experienced local leaders to conduct future dialogues. The program has been positively reviewed by participating communities and will expand in 2006.

Rural Initiative study highlights positives overlooked in broad statistics:

Tired of what seems like an endless stream of doom and gloom reports about trends in rural areas, Rural Initiative sociologist Randy Cantrell dug into the census data to go beyond broad population and economic statistics to research whether there are any positive trends to build upon. While population losses, an aging population, and declining birth rates are realities, he found some positive trends. For example, population increased in 40 counties and 288 incorporated communities. Although larger communities were more likely to grow, 52% of Nebraska towns under 2500 people also grew. "Aggregate population data tends to mask things that are going differently from the whole, so we miss them," according to Cantrell. "If we don't see these trends, how do we support or learn from them?" A copy is available by request or may be printed from our Web site.

Nebraska MarketMaker™ will provide new tool for Nebraska food producers:

Nebraskans will soon have an online marketing resource that gives farmers greater access to regional markets by linking them with processors, retailers, consumers and other food supply chain participants. In cooperation with the Food Processing Center at UNL and the University of Illinois, the Rural Initiative will provide an interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets for agricultural products in Nebraska, providing an important link between producers and consumers. *MarketMaker* will assist producers by identifying new markets and marketing partners beyond their own community and region while providing an online registration to allow potential businesses and customers to find and contact them.

Red Carpet Service teaches communities to put best foot forward:

A new program that teaches communities how to identify assets and boost community image for tourism was developed by a Rural Initiative extension educator and an extension specialist. Piloted in Broken Bow, the *Red Carpet Service* is a three-week hospitality curriculum and training course customized for each user community.

First offering of Bizfind™ is mailed to lenders, realtors and brokers:

Initiated in 2003, *Bizfind* software links businesses, community leaders, lenders, realtors, and others with each other and facilitates small business transition and opportunity for startups. *Bizfind* is a partnership between the Rural Initiative and the Nebraska Business Development Center at UNK, and was made available to lenders, realtors, and brokers through a statewide mailing in December. A second mailing to mayors, economic developers and other community representatives will go out in February of 2006. The Nebraska Press Association has supported the concept of *Bizfind* as a way to encourage the retention and development of small businesses. Responses from a number of communities and businesses have already been received. Thanks to the Nebraska Press Association for recent news stories and also to Nebraska Public Power District and the Department of Economic Development for their advice and links to their business development sites.

Rural Initiative staff initiates new Strategic Planning Process:

We continue to learn about the complex task of providing relevant research, education and engagement that will assist rural Nebraska's transition into the future. Networking, research, experimentation, and partnerships have informed our work. During 2005 we have reflected on "lessons learned" and will continue in a planning process that makes best use of our resources in collaboration with University and other partners. Program focus areas are: Regional and Community Development, Innovative Business and Agriculture, and Organizational Development.

Other 2005 accomplishments:

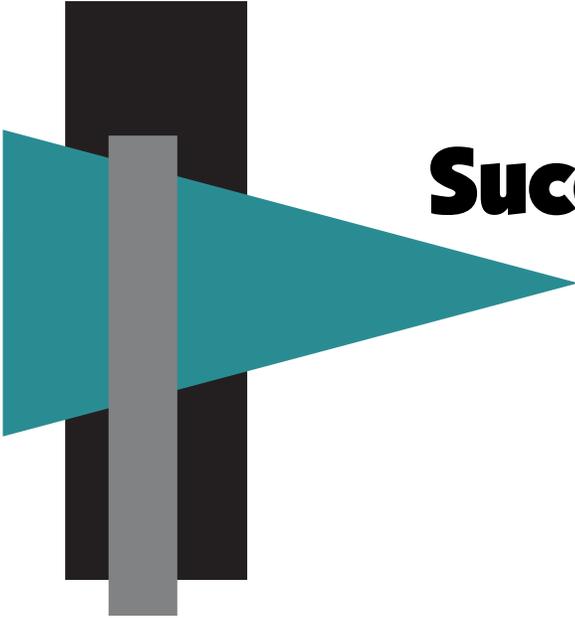
- In partnership with the Rural Development Commission, the Wyoming Rural Development Commission, the USDA Resource Conservation and Development Districts, the Center for Applied Rural Innovation and others, we have introduced the **Community Assessment** process used in Wyoming. This is a low-cost technique that assists communities with beginning steps in strategic planning. Implementation of a Nebraska version of this program is underway.
- Our **Federal Procurement Officer**, based at the NBDC at UNK, conducted workshops throughout Nebraska to assist rural businesses with obtaining federal contracts. Since April of 2004 he has worked with companies in 35 rural counties and has helped these companies generate \$481,915 in contracts.
- **Technology for Rural Nebraska:** Our map of broadband availability has been updated with help from the Nebraska Telephone Association and Congressman Osborne's staff. A new e-commerce curriculum was developed and delivered and our Web site added a "Rural Web Directory" and "Ask@NU", a comprehensive tool to access rural development efforts in Nebraska and resources at the University of Nebraska.
- **Leveraging funds and building capacity:** We participated in the development of successful grant proposals by the Department of Agricultural Economics, the Nebraska Grain and Feed Dealers, and with a team of faculty who are developing entrepreneurship modules for inclusion in regular courses within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) majors.

Please visit our updated website at <http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu> or call 402.472.2940 for more information on these and other programs. If you haven't checked our site for a while you will find new information on a variety of rural development programs in the state as well as other useful links for those interested in rural development.

Future Efforts:

As part of its planning document for 2008-2009 the Rural Initiative set a goal of re-examining its mission, objectives and outcomes and refining the assessment plan to better enable decision making. Not only is the original charge extremely broad, circumstances continue to change in rural Nebraska and even since 2002 we find economic, demographic, social and political changes of a magnitude that present new challenges that deserve consideration for the use of our resources. It is our desire that recommendations from this external review committee will help us refine our mission, direction, and assessment processes. We recognize that the nature of our work is systemic change and it is our intent to avoid programming and assessments that will have only short-term impact. We recognize the usual popularity of short-term efforts and outcomes, however, we believe strongly that significant change cannot be accomplished without long-term sustained effort. As examples, state legislation to benefit rural Nebraska in the 1980's is just now beginning to show measurable impacts. Similarly, the National Science Foundation embarked upon programming in 1990 to improve the teaching of science and mathematics and quickly concluded their efforts had to be systemic to be successful. That work continues and their "lessons learned" and other evaluation documents illustrate the challenges they faced with much larger budgets and goals much narrower than the Rural Initiative is intended to address. We have adapted their learnings when feasible.

We welcome the assistance of the review committee in addressing these issues.



Successes and Impacts



► Capacity Building:

The University of Nebraska Rural Initiative has strengthened the University's capacity for producing research and outreach that is relevant to rural Nebraska and the new challenges its residents face. We have built a strong and diverse central staff that includes: an agricultural economist, practicing farmer, experienced board member and local government official; a rural sociologist with experience in grant writing, demographic research, and extension; an extension educator located in the center of the state who specializes in tourism development; a program coordinator who is involved in farming and rural entrepreneurship and is skilled in office administration, computer and communication techniques, and is nearing completion of a masters degree in marketing; and a data coordinator who is skilled at web page maintenance, research and writing, is fluent in Spanish, and maintains a small acreage. The Director is engaged in farming and ranching in northwest Nebraska and has a background in educational psychology, career development for college students, grant writing and administration, and has served in elected and appointed political offices at the state level. A graduate student from a ranch in the Nebraska Sandhills works to support a variety of Rural Initiative programs and is pursuing a master's degree in Agricultural Leadership and Tourism. This is a strong team well qualified and grounded in rural Nebraska who can lead us into the future and continue to engage additional partners.

In addition to these core staff, the Rural Initiative originated the position of Water Outreach Associate who is responsible for linking and translating the water science produced at the University for use by state and local decision makers. We have succeeded in leveraging Rural Initiative funds from Extension and the Water Center to support this position. Briefings for state legislators and a wide variety of written and electronic information has been developed by this position to assist water decision makers. (See <http://watercenter.unl.edu/Publications.asp> and click on "Publications" and "Policy and Research." The Director of the Water Center has stated this position has made "a huge difference" in getting research into the hands of decision makers as well as quickly responding to inquiries.

The Rural Initiative has also bought out portions of various faculty's time to work on special projects such as: a computer scientist and his graduate student to research emerging technologies that may benefit rural internet access; a statistician to develop curricula on the use of data and statistical analysis processes to assist rural decision makers; and a team of economists to identify drivers and opportunities for the rural Nebraska economy. We have supported a variety of other faculty to engage in specific research projects including rural tourism, rural health, rural education, water research, the transfer patterns occurring in rural real estate, and the impact of Wal-Mart on small towns. (See <http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu> and go to "Rural Research" for a complete list of research initiated or supported by the Rural Initiative.)

We have provided a total of fifty-two undergraduate and twenty-five graduate students as community development interns, technology interns, or as student support for faculty who are working on a wide range of applied research and education: research on small and medium sized farms, community and regional planning, developing a curricula to assist producers interested in expanding production of high value horticultural products, developing programming and consulting on rural tourism programs across the state, researching new food items (particularly snack foods) using Nebraska products, and supporting the ReTree Nebraska program. ReTree Nebraska has as its goal the proper selection, planting and maintenance of one million trees in the next decade to replace the diminished tree canopy over Nebraska communities statewide (see <http://retreenebraska.unl.edu>).

The support provided to faculty has resulted in many external proposals and additional funds brought into the institution that benefit rural Nebraskans. The final total of these funds is still being compiled as several key proposals are pending; however the Grants section of this report (see Pages 19-22) lists the majority of proposals to date. It is encouraging to see faculty who have not previously engaged in research or outreach in rural areas begin to take interest in these topics, and that is largely due to the support of the Rural Initiative.

One frequently-noted frustration by Nebraskans is the number of services available with no tool to identify which ones best fit their needs and how to access those services. The Rural Initiative developed, with the assistance of the Nebraska Legislative staff, a matrix of rural programs found within and outside the University for rural development. Go to http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu/resources/rural_development.html to download rural development programs, their mission, programs and services offered and contact information. There is also a searchable database listed on this site that contains hundreds of websites of programs, organizations, and agencies that serve rural Nebraska. One may search by University campus, by category or enter a keyword. Both sites receive continuous maintenance to keep them as current as possible.

Strengthening Outreach and Education:

The Rural Initiative has devoted financial resources and time to insure that existing programming that serves rural Nebraskans well is preserved and strengthened. For example, during a period of budget shortfalls the Rural Initiative picked up salary for the Director of the EDGE (Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs) program. The program is now once again self-sufficient and experienced no interruption in educational outreach and programming as a result of Rural Initiative support. The Rural Initiative continues to collaborate with EDGE and participates in its planning process. Another important activity valued by Nebraskans is the annual Rural Poll. Again, budget shortfalls threatened its continuation and the Rural Initiative has provided support from its Rural Sociologist to insure the poll continues. This poll is used for planning by practitioners and policy makers.

The Nebraska Business Development Center based at UNO receives federal funds for Procurement Technical Assistance Centers. These Centers assist small businesses in obtaining federal grants and contracts. In order to strengthen services provided to the rural parts of Nebraska, the Rural Initiative has provided an annual match to support the office at the University of Nebraska-Kearney where most of the rural outreach for this program is based. This office reported providing 512 counseling sessions to 92 distinct clients between December 1, 2006 and November 27, 2007. Clients served from this office reported over \$17 million on contract awards between December 1, 2006 and November 27, 2007. Since the opening of this office in 2004 there have been 162 distinct clients served with 1,217 counseling sessions. Clients were served in 49 Nebraska communities in 43 counties and reported awards of \$38,254,071.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is a two-year program in Curtis, Nebraska. The Dean of NCTA approached the Rural Initiative about his interest in building entrepreneurship principles into all classes taught at NCTA. The Rural Initiative provided tuition for faculty at NCTA to complete EDGE classes. The Dean reported that every faculty member who completed the EDGE course is incorporating entrepreneurship principles in his or her classes. The Dean also credits the Rural Initiative's support for teaching his faculty entrepreneurship principles that helped him initiate the 100 Cow Program. This program will allow those students interested in ranching to graduate with 100 cows in order to move them closer to being eventual owners of a ranch.

Innovation and Experimentation:

One of the strengths of the Rural Initiative has been the strong support from Vice President and Vice Chancellor Owens and other IANR administrators who have encouraged us to be flexible and innovate and experiment with our programming. This administration understands the rate of change occurring in rural Nebraska requires constant monitoring and readjustment in order to remain nimble enough to meet the evolving challenges. As a result, we have initiated a variety of new approaches, keeping or spinning off the ones that are the most effective and reallocating resources from those that are less successful to new efforts. Examples of innovation and experimentation are listed below.

- In December 2003, as a result of a proposal from the Director of the Rural Initiative to the Dean of Extension, seven extension educators were reassigned from UNL Extension to the Rural Initiative for 18 months. This move allowed educators to spend 100% of their time on community development programming. Among the group's accomplishments were the creation of new curriculum for e-commerce and the development of the *Red Carpet Service* tourism program (See Appendix D). The team also expanded leadership programming into Thayer, Butler, Chase, Perkins, and Grant Counties and developed a new partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded *Home Town Competitiveness Program* in Nebraska to provide leadership education for their communities. In partnership with the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) the team developed and expanded the e-Government program. This collaboration led to a new partnership with NACO starting in 2007 where two of these educators are developing a leadership curriculum for county officials. The Rural Initiative retained one of the original seven educators to lead its rural tourism efforts and the other six rotated back to Extension. Out of this Extension/Rural Initiative collaboration came a jointly-produced publication designed to better describe to the public community development programming available in IANR and an increased level of community development activity statewide. (See Appendix E.) For a map illustrating the statewide outreach coverage that occurred as a result of this collaboration see Appendix F.

- The *Red Carpet Service* program has proven to be very popular with rural communities who seek to improve their front line hospitality and discover “hidden treasures” to help market their communities to tourists. *Red Carpet* curricula, developed during the Extension collaboration project, has been updated and presented to over 200 participants in 12 communities in both Nebraska and South Dakota. The program has received much favorable news coverage including the most recent on May 11, 2008 from the *North Platte Telegraph* column “Your Town and Mine.” The writer, who was the editor of the newspaper for 25 years and now is a contributing editor, wrote: “It is nice to hit a home run as our town did with location of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center here. But single base hits are important. It seems like a little thing, not much noticed but absolutely essential, to have front-line workers in motels, restaurants, gas stations and elsewhere who are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about our town’s attractions. The classes for those workers conducted by UNL are a low-cost ‘little thing’ with big payoff.” For more information see: http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu/development/tourism/red_carpet.html. Out of the lessons learned from this program has come new research by the Rural Initiative Educator in partnership with an Extension Specialist to develop programming to help rural bed and breakfasts be successful.

- In the summer of 2003 seven student interns from the J.D. Edwards Honors program in Computer Science and Management were placed in rural communities to increase technology usage and skills in those communities. Another 13 interns were placed in 2004. There was wide satisfaction from communities with these interns. However, the interns felt their skill level was higher than required by the projects the communities proposed, and it became difficult to recruit students. The Rural Initiative also had a goal of moving from a program where Rural Initiative funds were matched by communities to a goal of 100% support from the communities. This did not prove to be feasible. This experiment laid the groundwork for a new student engagement activity in 2005, *Dialogues Across Nebraska*.

- *Dialogues Across Nebraska* engaged undergraduate students and one graduate student in conducting intergenerational dialogues and providing customized reports summarizing results to rural communities to further their planning for the future. New curricula was developed and this model program was spun off to the Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication Department. It is being incorporated into their student educational programming. The students participating in this program provide a pool of potential future leaders for rural communities as well as individuals who appear to be more likely to work in public administration or serve in elected offices.

- The Rural Initiative hosts the *MarketMaker* program, an interactive website designed to connect Nebraska’s value added food producers with consumer markets. Launched during the 2006 State Fair, it had 997 subscribers at the end of 2007 and sustained an average of 7,500 hits per month during 2007. The Rural Initiative leader of this program has now organized a Local Foods Network here at the University of Nebraska that includes the “Buy Fresh Buy Local” program, the departments of Nutrition, Agronomy/Horticulture, and Animal Science, the Nebraska Cooperative Development Specialist, UNL Extension, the University Food Service’s Good Fresh and Local program, Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture, two USDA RC&D’s, the UNL Food Processing Center, the Nebraska Food Cooperative, the Nebraska Restaurant Association, and the Center for Rural Affairs. This program’s long-term goals are to have more young producers and for rural Nebraska to be more self sufficient in terms of local foods and food supply in ten years.

- The Rural Initiative sponsors speakers on and off campus who bring new ideas to our citizens. For example, at the 2007 annual “Marketplace Conference” organized by the *Center for Rural Affairs*, the Rural Initiative sponsored the keynote speaker, Terry Whipple, who described “Inventors and Entrepreneurship Clubs” in Wisconsin. An extension educator has successfully launched such a club in Nebraska City and another group has organized in Holdrege. We expect this model to grow as these groups become more visible.
- The Rural Initiative developed a small conference room fully equipped to teach and conduct meetings via distance. It is our intent to increase outreach via distance and to also increase educational opportunities in rural Nebraska using technology. This room is currently being used by our Hospitality and Tourism faculty to meet with Nebraskans and teach, by the RUPRI board members to attend meetings, and by the State of Nebraska’s Rural Development Commission to conduct training on competing for grant funding. We expect usage to continue to grow, particularly as our curricula for horticultural entrepreneurship is completed.
- In May 2008, the Rural Initiative, in cooperation with Extension, organized a meeting to bring together rural development professionals in Land Grant Universities in eight Great Plains states. All eight states agree that they have too few faculty dedicated to rural development and their resources have declined. The purpose of the meeting was to initiate a collaboration to share expertise and resources across state lines. We believe this may be the first meeting of this kind in the Great Plains, and we will continue to convene this group both virtually and again face-to-face within a year. This collaboration will bring new expertise into Nebraska while sharing Nebraska expertise with other states. In particular, it holds potential for accessing specialists to back up extension educators in areas where Nebraska may not have a specialist. This collaboration also has potential to bring in grant funds to meet the common needs of Great Plains states’ rural areas.

In summary, the Rural Initiative has worked to build collaborations and the capacity of the University of Nebraska to meet the ever changing needs of rural Nebraska. (See list of students supported and key collaborations on Pages 59-64.) We have supported the work of others on and off campus when appropriate to avoid duplication of effort and wasting resources. When justified and affordable we have experimented with new programming with the goal of serving as a catalyst rather than a long-term home for many of these new activities. This strategy allows us to stretch our budget and keep innovating. We will continue to investigate and advocate for the needs of rural Nebraskans as well as seek external funds to meet those needs. We will also continue to advocate within the institution for positions that we believe are necessary to better serve rural Nebraska.

Summary of Faculty and Student Engagement:

One of the primary objectives of the Rural Initiative has been to engage faculty and students in work that benefits rural areas. Since 2002, we have supported 52 faculty doing research or outreach. We have engaged 25 graduate and 57 undergraduate students in Rural Initiative programs either directly or through their work with faculty working on Rural Initiative programming. A total of \$1,279,953 has been brought in by members of the Rural Initiative staff. Additional external funds were obtained by faculty who received initial support from the Rural Initiative but an accurate total is not yet available.

Graduate Students:

The Rural Initiative has provided funding for twenty-five graduate students to support the work of faculty who are engaged in research that benefits rural residents. The support and research provided to faculty has resulted in many external proposals with additional funds brought into the institution that benefit rural Nebraskans. An exact figure for these funds is still being compiled as several key proposals are pending. It is encouraging to see faculty who have not previously engaged in research or outreach in rural areas begin to take interest in these topics and that is largely due to the support of the Rural Initiative. Below is a list of graduate students the Rural Initiative funded and the department they resided in.

2003 and 2004 Terry Waugh, Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication

2003 and 2004 Laura Manning, Community of Regional Planning, working with Brito Mutunayagam

2004 thru 2007 Sandra Sattler Weber, Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication, Dialogues Across Nebraska (DAN)

2005 Jennifer Price, Textiles Clothing and Design, working with Entrepreneurship Cluster group

2005 thru 2007 Anneke Gustafson, Agricultural Economics, with Azzeddine Azzam, rural cooperative advantages

2005 Veerajaneeya Nekkanti, Community and Regional Planning, Loup Basin Project with Brito Mutunayagam

2006 Emilio Serrano, Survey Research and Methodology Program, broadband survey

2006 Ratikanta Pattnaik, Bureau of Business Research, working with Eric Thompson

2006 Rebecca Kromminga, Center for Science, Math and Computer Education, Ruth Heaton, Rural Mathematic Teachers

2006 Jonathan Swinton, UNMC, Dave Robinson, Rural Health

2006 and 2007 Gibson Nene, Agricultural Economics, work with Azzeddine Azzam on Wal-Mart Study

2006 and 2007 Marcy Pummill, School of Natural Resources, birding tourism project with Ron Johnson

2007 Aziza Kibonge, Bureau of Business Research, working with Eric Thompson

2007 Jill Heywood, Family and Consumer Sciences, Richard Bischoff

2007 Jay Helmick, Community and Regional Planning, EDGE surveying, working with Connie Francis

2007 Erica Franklin, Women in Agricultural Economics, working with Azzeddine Azzam

2007 Magally Martinez, Women in Agricultural Economics

2007 Shardra Ruff, Women in Agricultural Economics

2007 Doussou Traore, Women in Agricultural Economics

2007 Mariana Saenz, Bureau for Business Research, work with Eric Thompson on 'Pillars of Growth'

2007 Naimain Swain, Agricultural Economics, work with Cheryl Burkhart Kriesel on 'Pillars of Growth'

2008 Yenti Gunayan, Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication, with Lisa Pennisi, Tourism

2008 Bradford Allen, Hospitality and Tourism, working with Robin DiPietro

2007 thru 2008 Kayla Churchill, Agricultural Leadership & Communication, Rural Initiative

2008 Natalie Sukup, Agronomy and Horticulture, High Tunnel, high tunnel project with Kim Todd

University of Nebraska Support and Collaboration:

The following is a representation of University colleagues who have been engaged in research outreach collaborations with the Rural Initiative. We thank them for their contributions to rural Nebraska.

Don Adams, Director, West Central Research and Extension Center; Associate Dean, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

Joe Atwood, Visiting Faculty, Agricultural Economics, UNL

Azzeddine Azzam, Professor, Agricultural Economics, UNL

Elisabeth Backer, Clinical Associate Professor, Family Medicine, UNMC

Alan Baquet, Department Head, Agricultural Economics, UNL

John Bartle, Director/Professor/Coordinator, Public Administration, UNO

Lorrie Benson, Specialist, Water Center, UNL

Eric Berg, Assistant Forester, Nebraska Forest Service, UNL

Robert Bernier, Assistant Dean, Nebraska Business Development Center, UNO

Beth Birnstihl, Associate Dean, Cooperative Extension Division, UNL

Richard Bischoff, Associate Professor, Child, Youth & Family Studies, UNL

Robert Blair, Associate Professor, Public Administration, UNO

James Brandle, Professor, School of Natural Resources, UNL

John Brasch, Associate Vice Chancellor, Office of Technology Development, UNL

Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Extension Associate Professor, Panhandle Research & Extension Center

Ken Cassman, Director, Center for Energy Sciences Research, UNL

Certified Public Manager Program, UNO

Dennis Conley, Professor, Agricultural Economics, UNL

Alan Corr, Extension Educator, West Central Research & Extension Center

James Crandall, Coordinator, Center for Applied Rural Innovation, UNL

Elaine Cranford, Coordinator, center for Applied Rural Innovation, UNL

Lance Cummins-Brown, Coordinator, Agribusiness Program, UNL

Gary Cunningham, Dean, Agricultural Research Division, UNL

Chris Decker, Associate Professor, Economics, UNO

Jerry Deichert, Director/Chair/Senior Research Associate, Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO

Elbert Dickey, Dean, Cooperative Extension Division, UNL

Robin DiPietro, Associate Professor, Nutrition & Health Sciences, UNL

Pam Edwards, Assistant Director, Housing Dining Services, UNL

Justin Evertson, Assistant Director, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

Rolando Flores, Department Head, Food Science & Technology; Director, Food Processing Center, UNL

Charles Francis, Professor, Agronomy and Horticulture, UNL

Susan Fritz, Associate Vice Chancellor, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Associate Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, UNL

Gallup Research Center, UNL

Jenene Geske, Assistant Professor, Family Medicine, UNMC

James Goeke, Professor, Survey Division, School of Natural Resources, West Central Research & Extension Center – Nebraska Horizons Scanning Team

Kim Hachiya, Specialist, Office of University Communications, UNL – Nebraska Horizons Scanning Team

Mary Hamilton, Senior Community Service Associate, Public Administration, UNO

Connie Hancock, Extension Educator, Panhandle Research & Extension Center

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Martin Massengale, Foundation Distinguished Professor; Director, Center for Grassland Studies, UNL

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Zellmer, Sandra, Professor, College of Law, UNL

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Lory Cappel, West Central Development District, Ogallala

Center for Applied Rural Innovation, UNL

Center for Rural Affairs Board of Directors, Lyons, Nebraska

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Rose Jaspersen, Executive Director, Nebraska Microenterprise Partnership Fund, Oakland, Nebraska

Jim Jenkins, Nebraska Development Coordinator, Third Planet Windpower, Calloway, Nebraska

John Jordison, Chair, Nebraska Rural Development Commission, North Platte

Charles Karpf, Entrepreneur/Discovery Program Director, Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff Campus

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Nebraska Grain and Feed Association, Lincoln

Nebraska RC&Ds (Resource, Conservation & Development) – Nebraska Loess Hills, Five Rivers, Loup Basin, Nebraska Great Plains, North Central Nebraska, Northeast Nebraska, Panhandle, Prairie Land, Sandhills, South Central Nebraska, Southwest Nebraska, Trailblazer

Nebraska Telecommunications Association, Lincoln

NEVAP (Nebraska Value Added Partnership), Lincoln

Keith Olsen, President, Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation, Lincoln

Partnership for Rural Nebraska, Center for Applied Rural Information, UNL

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L. Lynn Rex, Executive Director, League of Nebraska Municipalities, Lincoln

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Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway organization – Hall, Buffalo, Sherman, Custer, Blaine, Thomas, Hooker, Grant, Sheridan, and Box Butte counties, Nebraska

Susan Seacrest, President, Groundwater Foundation, Lincoln

(Former) Senator Bob Kremer, District 34, Aurora, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator Carroll Burling, District 33, Kenesaw, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator Chris Langemeier, District 23, Schuyler, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator Deb Fischer, District 43, Valentine, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator Diana Schimek, District 27, Lincoln, Nebraska Unicameral

(Former) Senator Doug Cunningham, District 40, Wausa, Nebraska Unicameral

(Former) Senator Elaine Stuhr, District 24, Bradshaw, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator Joel Johnson, District 37, Kearney, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator John Harms, District 48, Scottsbluff, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator Leroy Louden, District 49, Ellsworth, Nebraska Unicameral

Senator Mick Mines, District 18, Blair, Nebraska Unicameral

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Larry Swanson, Director, O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West, Missoula, Montana

Tom Tabor, Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, Lincoln

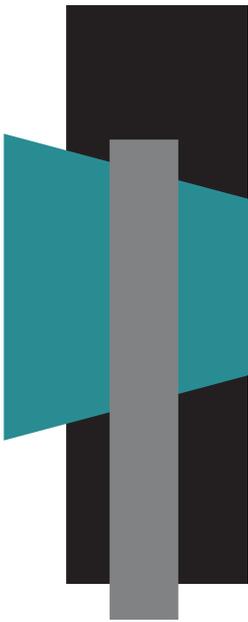
Milan Wall, Co-Director, Heartland Center for Leadership Development, Lincoln

Chris Weaver, Managing Director, World Wildlife Fund-Namibia program, Washington, D.C.

Steve Williams, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Lincoln

Wyoming Rural Development Council, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Jeff Yost, President and CEO, Nebraska Community Foundation, Lincoln



Weaknesses to Address



As has been shown by the review of past efforts and accomplishments, the strategy to focus the Rural Initiative funds on building University capacity and outreach/educational programming has led to a variety of innovative approaches. These approaches have brought to bear University resources from across colleges and campuses to work on rural Nebraska economic and community development issues and has engaged external partners as well. The efforts over the past five years have also pointed out some deficiencies to this approach.

- The University has few doctoral level faculty members in specialties directly related to rural community and economic development. Consequently, not only is it difficult for the Rural Initiative to identify faculty to work with, extension educators working in this area do not have trained specialists to guide them in many of the emerging areas important to today's economy. Also, extension educators have very full loads with at least two focus areas to fulfill as well as duties related to their local or regional communities such as county fairs and other local events.
- Solicitation of diverse short-term research and engagement activities from across the four campuses has not resulted in cohesive sustainable programming in many cases. Some faculty have successfully used Rural Initiative funds to build the foundation for competing for external funds. Others have not continued their work in funded areas nor have they engaged students in these areas.
- It is difficult to engage tenure track faculty if the work is not directly tied to their area of interest or is perceived as negatively impacting their ability to earn promotion and tenure. Most established faculty members are fully employed with existing research, extension, teaching and committee commitments. There is little time or incentive to alter their position description or add additional commitments. Also, since the Rural Initiative does not evaluate their work in terms of promotion or tenure decisions or set their salary, there is little incentive to respond.
- Funding for work in rural development is relatively small when compared to that provided to such agencies as the National Science Foundation or the National Institute for Health. Private foundations provide important but limited support, and competition for both public and private funds

is intense, with many competitors who are often cautious about partnering out of need for the total amount of potential funding. It is unrealistic to expect large increases in state funds, thus, it is essential to continue to seek new external resources if we are to expand or initiate programs.

- It would be helpful if faculty who engage in Nebraska-oriented applied research and educational outreach were accorded the same level of respect and rewards as those in basic research that carries the prospect of large external grants.
- Finally, with the recent interest in food, water, energy and climate change as factors that will change both rural and urban areas in ways that are not yet fully understood, it is important to consider where the Rural Initiative can make the most significant contribution to sustain the economy and quality of life in rural areas as changes occur.

To address these deficiencies, we are considering the following actions:

First, the Rural Initiative will become more focused in its approach. Certain endeavors have proven valuable and are ongoing, but others have not. To enhance the impact of future endeavors, we will consider certain criteria for determining where effort will be placed. The criteria include:

- The Rural Initiative will refocus its efforts on partnering primarily with faculty and units at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln and more specifically within IANR. IANR has a century-long tradition of concern for and interaction with rural Nebraska. It has a presence throughout the State in the form of its research and extension centers and county extension offices. It follows that the Rural Initiative can be most effective by building upon this presence and trust. As other expertise outside of IANR is needed, the Rural Initiative, working with IANR administrators, will reach out to engage those resources where appropriate.
- Efforts will continue to refrain from duplicating activities where there is already a commitment and evidence of success. For example, there are several organizations providing leadership training to rural Nebraskans: Leadership Plenty, Heartland Center for Leadership, Home Town Competitiveness (HTC), LEAD, local leadership groups (e.g. Leadership York), and extension educators working with the Nebraska Association of Counties. It makes little sense for the Rural Initiative to work at creating another leadership program; however if a request for assistance is made, we will partner if the proposed role is affordable and appropriate for a University. The Rural Initiative will concentrate on activities that take advantage of the strengths of the University – research and program curriculum development. Where the University of Nebraska lacks expertise important to rural development, the Rural Initiative will encourage and support growing that capacity including seeking resources external to the University.

Second, the Rural Initiative will propose working more closely with the Agriculture Research Division and University Extension to jointly fund faculty positions relevant to rural development. This will provide the expertise needed to develop sustainable rural development research and educational programming while still maintaining flexible funding resources to support innovative research and curriculum development projects important to rural Nebraska.

Third, after considering the above, we believe there are three areas where a strengthened University effort can positively impact the stabilization and enhancement of the economy and quality of life in rural Nebraska. All three areas can benefit from additional research and program development. The areas are:

- Community planning and development – Both research and anecdotal evidence suggests that many rural communities are not informed of or have not adapted their efforts to changes in rural community development approaches – where efforts to recruit industries may not be the best strategy; where growing local entrepreneurs may be more effective; where efforts to attract and retain new residents are as important as creating jobs; and where emphasizing the quality of life attributes are as important, if not more important, than promoting jobs. In fact, many Nebraska communities report a shortage of trained workforce for existing jobs. Finally, maintaining a strong infrastructure across the state and within communities is essential for future economic development and retaining and attracting a viable population base. The University of Nebraska can contribute to a more vibrant rural Nebraska by providing research and outreach programs which determine the most promising practices for our rural communities.

- Rural entrepreneurship – Focusing on developing an individual’s capacity for creating and/or growing businesses in rural Nebraska may have more potential for providing employment opportunities than working to attract footloose industries to many rural communities. Nebraska ranks very high nationally in new, rapidly growing entrepreneurial businesses¹. There are several entities working directly to build skills of and support entrepreneurs including the EDGE program, ESI curriculum, the P²E Club, the Food Processing Center, and the Center for Entrepreneurship within the University as well as the REAP program of the Center for Rural Affairs and the Nebraska Microenterprise Partnership Fund, among others. The Rural Initiative can contribute by collaborating with University technology development centers to identify business opportunities from University discoveries that have potential for rural areas, and provide funding for dissemination of research-based knowledge relevant to successful business startups. The growing interest in developing sustainable energy sources provide just one example of where entrepreneurial opportunities lie. The University can play an important role in Nebraska capturing the potential of this and other emerging economic development prospects.

- Farm-based value added enterprise development – Although often overlooked as a rural development strategy, adding employment opportunities on farms should be as effective as creating new jobs in town for the overall social and economic well being of a community. This is especially relevant to the western two-thirds of Nebraska where agriculturally dependent counties prevail. In a report to USDA Rural Development entitled *Why Some Communities Prosper While Others Do Not*, Isserman, Feser and Warren² found that the most prosperous rural counties had, among other characteristics, an agriculture economy having more farms, more family farms and more farm employment.

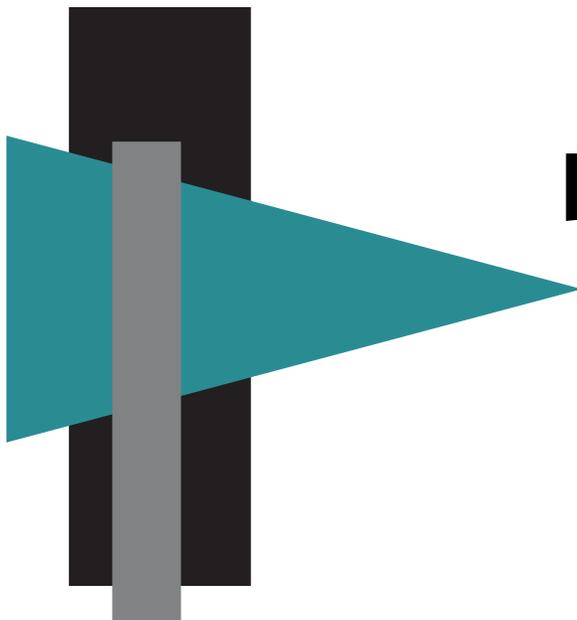
Creating more efficient commodity based farms (higher yields/acre and/or lower costs/acre) does not create additional employment opportunities. On the contrary, it has led to reduced number of farms and those employed by them. On-farm value-added enterprises will create additional management and labor requirements resulting in more employment in the community. This is also an area where the University in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources has a solid base of expertise. By focusing more of its expertise on value-added opportunities for farms of all sizes, IANR has the potential to make an important contribution to the economies of rural communities.

To have a meaningful impact, the University must build additional capacity in each of these areas. To that purpose we propose the following:

- The Rural Initiative will propose partnering with University Extension and the Agriculture Research Division to add Ph D.-trained faculty members with expertise in the areas outlined above. The faculty will have an appointment in a department as well as the Rural Initiative. The Rural Initiative will contribute one-half of the salaries and share in the direction and evaluation of the member's program of work along with the department head. This will leverage ARD, Extension and Rural Initiative resources to build a stronger presence in rural development.
- The Rural Initiative will also partner with University Extension to fund an extension educator specialist position to fill a need for enterprise budgeting for alternative crops.
- The Rural Initiative will collaborate with Extension and ARD to build regional efforts to address the problems facing rural areas of the Midwest and Great Plains. An initial effort has been started bringing extension rural development specialists from eight states (NE, CO, KS, OK, MT, ND, SD & WY) together for workshops and planning sessions.
- The Rural Initiative will continue to build internal and external collaborations in order to coordinate and leverage resources to positively impact rural Nebraska. (As an example, the Rural Initiative has recently initiated a discussion among several departments and organizations interested in increasing opportunities in local food production and marketing.)
- The Rural Initiative will encourage and support faculty efforts to pursue external grant funding for research, extension and teaching activities relevant to rural Nebraska community and economic development.

¹ "The 2007 State New Economy Index: Benchmarking Economic Transformations in the States", Atkinson, Robert D., Correa, Daniel K., Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, February 2007, <www.innovationpolicy.org/07index>, p 14.

² "Why Some Communities Prosper while Others Do Not, Andrew Isserman, Edward Feser, & Drake Warren, University of Illinois, Report to the Undersecretary of Rural Development, May 23, 2007 p. 8.



Future Direction



► Plans for 2008-2011:

This plan reflects the lessons learned over the first five years of operation and a clearer sense of where we are going and how to get there. Our accomplishments reflect the support of many colleagues on and off campus, funders, and the energy and creativity of our staff. The challenges in rural Nebraska, and indeed rural America, remain daunting but there are also areas of potential and importance to the future which deserve attention. We intend to be opportunity-driven without forgetting the fundamental needs that are critical to future success of individuals, business and agriculture, and communities and regions. We strive to realistically undertake programming that matches the strengths of the Rural Initiative and the University. We will position ourselves to encourage, support and, when appropriate, initiate research and outreach that is essential to the future economy and quality of life in rural Nebraska while respecting our heritage.

We welcome the advice of the readers of this report because, like all good plans, they are reviewed and updated as conditions change and it appears that change and ambiguity are going to continue to be constants in our world.

► Vision Statement:

From its position in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Rural Initiative will establish itself as a leading catalyst for research and outreach relevant to rural residents of Nebraska and the Great Plains. Building on the University's strengths, we will engage partners to assist Nebraskans in preparing for a future that will be driven by the global demand for abundant, safe and affordable food; adequate clean water supplies for a variety of competing users; safe, reliable and affordable sources of renewable energy; and the challenges presented by climate change. We will contribute to collaborations that promote agricultural productivity and wise resource management across the various sizes of agricultural operations and expand emphasis on viable alternative agriculture and small- and medium-size producers. We recognize entrepreneurship, agritourism and ecotourism are strategies for rural economic diversification

and will work to assist individuals, communities, and regions interested in these areas. We also recognize that communities who thrive in the future will require a strong base of infrastructure, well educated people, and visionary and committed leaders and volunteers. We will partner with a range of departments and other Institutions of Higher Education, government, NGOs and citizens to assist communities and regions in maintaining and improving these essential assets. Our goal is to learn and disseminate strategies for building sustainable communities and regions over the long term. We will advocate within the University for building capacity in areas where we find unmet needs or opportunities that benefit rural residents that are most appropriately filled by the University of Nebraska and seek external funds to supplement our own institutional capacity. We will support and encourage research and engagement that will inform rural citizens of the opportunities and consequences of policy choices related to those areas where the University has or can develop expertise.

Mission:

The University of Nebraska Rural Initiative works to engage the widest possible range of knowledge, skills and creativity on the four campuses of the University of Nebraska upon stabilizing and enhancing the economy and quality of life in rural Nebraska.

To accomplish this, the Initiative supports interdisciplinary applied research on rural economic and community and regional development, and provides training and other outreach, distance education, and relevant formal and informal reports to citizens and decision makers. We support the development of our own and other staff and faculty capacity in areas designed to lead to the development of sustainable (economically, socially, politically and environmentally) rural communities and regions. Opportunities are provided for student research and community and regional engagement and we are committed to working in partnership with federal state and local governments, communities, businesses, agriculture, nongovernmental organizations and other institutions of higher education who share our objectives.

Research and Outreach:

1. Increase the Rural Initiative's role as the leading catalyst for research and outreach relevant to rural Nebraska residents.
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Action steps:

- 1.1 – Advocate for a permanent position in Agricultural Economics to research small and medium farm and ranch productivity and best practices.
- 1.2 – Advocate for filling the regional economist/rural sociologist position recently vacated in Agricultural Economics.
- 1.3 – Partner in filling a master's level joint appointment between Agricultural Economics and the Rural Initiative for developing Enterprise Budgets.
- 1.4 – Partner to jointly support with Extension a new Rural Tourism Educator and Team Leader.
- 1.5 – Support the Rural Poll and conduct other surveys and listening sessions to identify changing needs, opportunities and attitudes across Nebraska.

- 1.6 – Facilitate a newly formed eight-state collaboration from the Great Plains to expand research and outreach in natural resources, energy, and community futures. Publish “Promising Practices” for communities and identify opportunities for knowledge sharing and proposal development.
- 1.7 – Identify and facilitate multidisciplinary groups to seek external funding on priority issues.

2. Build programming that promotes sustainable rural communities and regions.

Action steps:

- 2.1 – Plan a multistate approach to define, in partnership with community leaders and other experts, the essentials for a “sustainable rural community and/or region .”
- 2.2 – Identify faculty and experts outside the University who will provide information or training on infrastructure issues, leadership, volunteer recruitment and coordination, public finance, asset identification including natural amenities, workforce development strategies, recruitment of professionals, healthcare access, transportation, lifelong education, government relations and marketing. Use distance delivery as much as possible to cut energy costs.
- 2.3 – Develop funding strategies and seek funding partners to help obtain the services of experts identified above and develop Requests for Proposals from communities and regions who wish to build their capacity for sustainability.
- 2.4 – Select and pilot programs in at least eight communities or regions and evaluate success after three years.

3. Engage existing faculty, University Centers, and students in collaboratives that deliver outreach or research that benefits rural Nebraskans.

Action steps:

- 3.1 – Continue the collaboration with the Water Center and Extension to expand access to University water research for use by decision makers and the public. Identify opportunities for expanded outreach and development of information useful to the public.
- 3.2 – Propose a partnership with the Center for Energy Sciences Research to develop an Energy Outreach Associate to bridge the gap between the latest science related to alternative sources of energy and interested public and decision makers. Seek funding from Nebraska Public Power to support this position.
- 3.3 – Provide graduate and undergraduate students to support faculty researchers working in Rural Initiative priority areas: sustainable communities and regions; food production, marketing and distribution, and quality; wise use of natural resources to promote sustainable agriculture and rural communities and regions; dissemination of research on energy conservation and renewable energy resources; and innovative small business and agriculture with a focus on small- and medium-sized operations.
- 3.4 – Engage in planning with the Water Center and the Center for Drought Mitigation to increase student enrollments in majors relevant to water, drought and climate change.
- 3.5 – Disseminate results of USDA-NRI funded research on attracting and retaining new residents in small towns via distance, presentations, and publications. Administer the anticipated follow-up grant to expand community knowledge of workforce recruitment and retention.
- 3.6 – Identify and facilitate multidisciplinary teams to seek external funding on priority issues.

4. Support outreach and education to increase rural entrepreneurship and small business growth.

Action Steps:

- 4.1 – Support the Procurement Technical Assistance Center at UNK to increase the number of contacts and contracts.
- 4.2 – Encourage and support the establishment of Inventers and Entrepreneurs Clubs in 10 regions of the state.
- 4.3 – Expand the “Red Carpet Service” curriculum and the number of training sessions delivered.
- 4.4 – Expand the” MarketMaker” program by increasing subscribers and building connections to new markets for Nebraska products.
- 4.5 – Collaborate with Extension, Hospitality and Tourism, and Agricultural Leadership and Communication to develop new Nebraska enterprises that provide experiential tourism.
- 4.6 – Continue to work with the University-wide entrepreneurship group.
- 4.7 – Develop, in partnership with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET), the Center for Information Technology (CIT) in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Colleges of Business at UNL and UNK a televised program featuring experts on topics essential to building successful small businesses.
- 4.8 – Develop a website to archive and enhance the small business television program.

5. Catalyze and support development of programming to increase quality and supply of food to rural Nebraskans and increase production and marketing by small- and medium-sized agricultural producers.

Action Steps:

- 5.1 – Engage faculty and students in new research related to promoting small- and medium-sized farms and ranches. Seek external funding and a new position for this purpose.
- 5.2 – Publicize “MarketMaker” in under-enrolled counties to recruit new producers.
- 5.3 – Build the capacity of the Local Foods Network by providing continued Rural Initiative organizational support and long-range planning assistance.
- 5.4 – Complete curriculum being developed with Agronomy and Horticulture on extending the growing season and expanding production of high value products using high tunnel greenhouses. Deliver educational programming via distance.
- 5.5 – Continue to support research by the Food Processing Center on the development and processing of new high value food products in Nebraska.
- 5.6 – Explore programming on preserving rural grocery stores such as that being initiated in Kansas. If feasible, initiate similar activities in Nebraska.

6. Build information network to inform rural citizens of opportunities and consequences of state policy choices that may affect their future.

Action Steps:

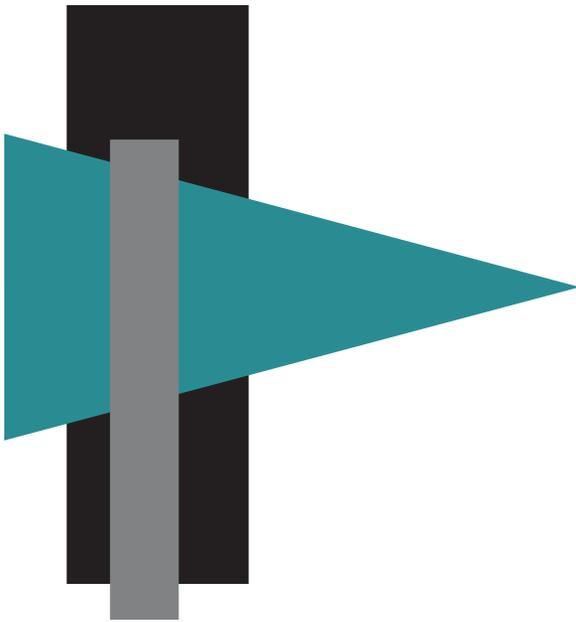
- 6.1 – Interact with rural policy makers at the state and local level to identify key issues requiring research or information.
- 6.2 – Work with faculty in public policy units to organize systems to respond to inquiries from decision makers and the public about the impact of policy choices. Recruit expertise from other units as required.
- 6.3 – Disseminate objective analysis of key issues that affect rural residents in those areas where the University has expertise.

7. Manage human and financial resources to build a desirable and productive workplace that encourages creativity and delivers accountability to the public.

Action Steps:

- 7.1 – Engage each staff member in professional development at least once a year.
- 7.2 – Update all job descriptions by July 2008 and every two years thereafter.
- 7.3 – Recognize staff achievements and special events with parties and verbal and written acknowledgements.
- 7.4 – Provide electronic and print communications that serve to inform the public of our role and services. Continue weekly maintenance and updating the the website.
- 7.5 – Seek suggestions to enhance the work environment and build institutional capacity for the most positive impact on employees and the citizens we serve.
- 7.6 – Evaluate all programming for impact and cost effectiveness annually.

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Staff Vitae



Permanent Staff:

- Randolph Cantrell
- Connie Francis
- Mark Gustafson
- Peggy Hauschild
- Kim Peterson
- Sandra K. Scofield
- Walt Stroup

Randolph L. Cantrell

EDUCATION

B.A., March, 1971, Michigan State University. Major in Multidisciplinary Social Science, with core areas in anthropology, economics and business management.

M.S., September, 1973, Cornell University. Major in Manpower Studies at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

Ph.D., September, 1976, Cornell University. Major in Development Sociology, Minor in Research Methods. Dissertation title: *Community Structure and Decision Making: The Case of Federal Flood Insurance*.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

October 2002 to present: Professor and Extension Community Resource Development Specialist, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Nebraska Rural Initiative.

April, 1995 to October, 2002: Director of Southeast Research and Extension Center and Southeast Extension District, University of Nebraska. Chief personnel, program and financial officer for University of Nebraska Extension outreach programs in 21 Southeastern Counties, supervising 63 faculty members, 40 additional staff, a budget of over \$2 million, and an on campus research faculty.

January 1994 to April, 1995: Professor and Director of Outreach and Extension Education, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.

October, 1990 to January, 1994: Professor and Extension Educator/Leadership in Community Development, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Project Coordinator for “Project Future,” a rural revitalization initiative of the Minnesota Extension Service. Charged with developing collaborative programs between the Humphrey Institute and Extension within the context of that project.

March, 1989 to September, 1990: Interim Program Leader for Community Economic Development, Minnesota Extension Service. Charged with providing direction to program development, personnel and budget for statewide community economic development activities.

December, 1987 to March, 1989: Extension Specialist and Associate Professor, Minnesota Extension Service, Educational Development Systems. Primary assignment as Community Design Program Leader for Project Future, with responsibility for creation of an on-line information system, program development, material development and staff development associated with Project Future’s community revitalization efforts in five pilot communities in rural Minnesota.

April, 1985 to December, 1987: Extension Educator and Associate Professor, Minnesota Extension Service, Educational Development Systems. Primary assignment as administrative head of the Minnesota Analysis and Planning System (MAPS), a member of the State Data Center Network and federal data depository. Duties included management of MAPS staff and budget, education on data analysis and secondary data resources, research consultation with University faculty, government and business, and coordination of Minnesota State Data Center activities with the Office of the State Demographer.

September, 1978 to April, 1985: Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology, University of Minnesota. Primary assignment as Community Resource Development Specialist with the Minnesota Extension Service. Secondary duties included research for the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station and teaching in the College of Agriculture (Resource and Community Development and Minnesota Community) and the College of Liberal Arts (Rural Sociology).

Courses Taught (Last Two Years)

AECN276/SOC241 Rural Sociology

GRANTS

Received: U.S.D.A National Research Initiative: 2006 – 2008. “Relocation to the Buffalo Commons: Using a Marketing Approach to Understand Residential Decisions Among Migrants to Nebraska’s Panhandle. Total award: \$221,000

Under Review: U.S.D.A National Research Initiative: 2008 – 2010. “Marketing rural Communities to Attract and Retain Workers. Total request: \$486,000.

HONORS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1) B.A. with High Honor
- 2) Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
- 3) Gamma Delta Sigma, Honor Society of Agriculture

Examples of Papers Published: 2006 – 2008

- *Moving to the Rural Great Plains: Point of Origin Differences in the Decision Making Process*, with Bruce Johnson, Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Rebecca Vogt and Charlotte Narjes. Accepted for publication in a forthcoming edition of *Great Plains Research*.
- *Tourists and Travelers Generate Dollars – And More: Results of a Survey of Visitors to Western Nebraska*, with Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel. *Business in Nebraska*, Vol. 62, No. 688, October, 2007. University of Nebraska Bureau of Business Research.
- *Newcomers to the Nebraska Panhandle: Who Are They?* with Bruce Johnson, Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Rebecca Vogt and Charlotte Narjes, Center for Applied Rural Innovation. RB-07-001
- *Newcomers to the Nebraska Panhandle: Why Did They Come Here?* with Bruce Johnson, Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Rebecca Vogt and Charlotte Narjes. in *Relocation to the Buffalo Commons*. Center for Applied Rural Innovation. RB-07-002
- *Newcomers to the Nebraska Panhandle: How do We Keep Them Here?* with Bruce Johnson, Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Rebecca Vogt and Charlotte Narjes. in *Relocation to the Buffalo Commons*. Center for Applied Rural Innovation. RB-07-001
- *Nebraska’s Micropolitan Statistical Areas: A Growing Piece of a Shrinking Pie*. *Business in Nebraska*, Vol. 62, No. 686, April, 2007. University of Nebraska Bureau of Business Research.
- *Where Do Rural Nebraskans Plan to Retire*, with David Peters, Miguel Carranza, Bruce Johnson and Rebecca Vogt. Research Brief 07-002, September 2007. Center for Applied Rural Innovation, University of Nebraska.
- *Rural Nebraskans and Health Care in Retirement*. with Rebecca Vogt, Bruce Johnson, David Peters and Miguel Carranza. Nebraska Rural Poll Research Brief 07-03, Center for Applied Rural Innovation.
- *Rural Nebraskans and Retirement Income*. with Rebecca Vogt, Bruce Johnson, David Peters and Miguel Carranza. Nebraska Rural Poll Research Brief 07-04, Center for Applied Rural Innovation
- *Rural Nebraskans Working in Retirement*. with Rebecca Vogt, Bruce Johnson, David Peters and Miguel Carranza. Nebraska Rural Poll Research Brief 07-05, Center for Applied Rural Innovation.
- *Retirement Plans and Perceptions Among Rural Nebraskans*. with David Peters, Miguel Carranza, Bruce Johnson and Rebecca Vogt. Research Brief 07-001, September 2007. Center for Applied Rural Innovation, University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
- *Perceptions of Well Being among Rural Nebraskans*. with Rebecca Vogt, Bruce Johnson, David Peters and Miguel Carranza. Nebraska Rural Poll. Center Research Report 07-01, Center for Applied Rural Innovation
- *Rural Depopulation: A Closer Look at Nebraska’s Counties and Communities*. University of Nebraska Rural Initiative White Paper. September, 2006.

Connie Francis

402 W State Farm Road, North Platte NE 69101

Phone: 308-696-6739 Fax: 308-696-6780

E-mail: cfrancis1@unl.edu

Earned Degrees

M.A., August 1986, Chadron State College. Emphasis: Interpersonal relationships

B.S., May 1969, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Emphasis: Consumer Science Education

Employment History

Extension Educator, University of Nebraska Rural Initiative, 2003 - present

Extension Educator, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, Lincoln County, 1990 - 2003

Extension Specialist - Family Life (temporary assignment), University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, 1989 - 1990

Extension Agent - Home Economics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, Sheridan County, 1981-1988

Director/Teacher, Long Pine Preschool, Long Pine NE, 1980-1981

Instructor, Area XIII Rehabilitation Center, Council Bluffs IA, 1971-1973

Extension Agent - Home Economics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, Antelope, Knox, Pierce Counties, 1970-1971

Professional Activities

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, 2004 - present

National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 1970-70 and 1981-present (external marketing task force chair, 2003-2004, state affiliate president 1997)

Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association, 1970-71 and 1981-present (various committee memberships and chairs)

North Platte Noon Rotary, 2000 - present (President, 2005-2006, District Assistant Governor, 2006-2008)

Honors and Awards

Distinguished Extension Educator, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, 2003

Herb Lingren Strengthening Families Award - Honorable mention (*NU for Families*), Herb Lingren family, May 2002 West-central district representative on leadership team.

Excellence in Team Programming (*NU for Families*), University of Nebraska - Lincoln Extension, October 2002. Member of leadership team.

Team Effort Award: Sustainable Families Action Team, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, March 2001. Member of leadership team.

Community Partnerships Award, National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, April 2001. Team member.

Finalist: Extension Educator of the Year, National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, October 2000.

“Intentional Families” Television feature - media award, Nebraska Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, April 2000.

Continued Excellence Award, National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, November 1997.

Diversity Award, National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, November 1994.

Distinguished Service Award, National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, November 1994.

Publications

Francis, C. and Burkhart-Kriesel, C. Red Carpet Service: Linking Rural Communities to Travelers and Tourists. *Journal of Extension*, 45(6), Article 6FCA7. Retrieved January 15, 2008 from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2007december/a7.shtml>

Francis, C. 10 Ways to Make the Most of Your Journey. 2007 Web-publication available at <http://www.sandhillsjourney.com/tripplanner/10Ways.pdf>

Francis, C and Burkhart-Kriesel, C. Red Carpet Service. Curriculum for tourism hospitality training. December 2004.

Mark R. Gustafson

DEGREES:

University of California, Berkeley	Agricultural Economics and Natural Resources	Ph.D., 1974
University of Nebraska	Agricultural Economics	M.S., 1968
University of Nebraska	Agricultural Economics	B.S., 1967

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

University of Nebraska, Rural Initiative	Coordinator, Rural Economic Development,	2007-Present
Family Farm Mead, Nebraska	Owner/Operator	1978-Present
Farmers Home Administration	Consultant	1985
Omaha Bank of Cooperatives	Consultant	1983
University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Consultant	1980
University of California, Berkeley	Research Associate	1976-77
University of Rhode Island at the Instituto de Tecnologia de Alimentos Campinas, Sao Paulo, Brazil	Visiting Assistant Professor	1974-76
University of California, Berkeley	Research Assistant	1968-74
University of Nebraska	Research Assistant	1967-68

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS:

- E. Phillip LeVeen and Mark R. Gustafson, "The Potential Impact of Direct-Marketing Policies on the Economic Viability of Small Fruit and Vegetable Farms in California", Giannini Foundation Research Report No. 327, California Agricultural Experimental Station, Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics, University of California, Berkeley, December 1978, 26 pp.
- Gustafson, Mark R. and Curtis Moulton, "The Marketing Situation and Opportunities for Low-Income Growers of Fresh Produce in California", Special Publication 3237, Community Development Research Series, Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California, Davis, August 1977, 8 pp.
- Gustafson, Mark R. and Curtis Moulton, "Marketing for the Small Farmer", Special Publication 3236, Community Development Research Series, Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California, Davis, August 1977, 6 pp.
- Gustafson, Mark R. and Curtis Moulton, "How to Determine if it is Profitable to Harvest Your Crop", Special Publication 3235, Community Development Research Series, Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California, Davis, August 1977, 8 pp.
- Gustafson, Mark R. and Curtis Moulton, "Marketing for the Small Farmer: Marketing Cooperatives", University of California Family Farm Series, 1983, 2 pp
- Gustafson, Mark, Bruce F. Hall, E. Phillip LeVeen, and David Pelzer, "Results of the Small Farm Survey", California Agricultural Experiment Station, University of California, Berkeley, September, 1977, 24 pp.
- Gustafson, Mark R., Robert Murphy, and Odair Corte, "The Brazilian Meat Industry - Production to Retail: General Practices, Conditions and Other Information", Consortium for the Development of Technology, College of Natural Resources, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I., 1975, 23 pp.

PROFESSIONAL AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES:

- Candidate, Nebraska Legislature, District 23, 2004
- Co-Chair, Domestic Marketing Committee, Governor's Taskforce, Trade and Traceability, 2003-04
- Co-Chair, University of Nebraska, IANR Taskforce for Agriculture Diversity, 2002-04

Member, IANR Strategic Planning Committee, 2003-04
 Ag @ the Crossroads Planning Committee, 2003-present
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln Future Nebraska Taskforce - 2020, 1999-00
 Member, Search Committee for Vice Chancellor of University of Nebraska, IANR, 1999-00
 National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, Council for Agricultural Research Extension and Teaching (CARET), 1991-present
 CARET Executive Committee, 2005-present; President, North Central Region, 1998-06
 Secretary, North Central Region, 1995-98
 CARET representative to Board of Agriculture FY99 Budget Committee, 1996-98
 Agriculture Builders of Nebraska Inc., Board of Director, 1992-06
 President, 2003; Immediate Past President, 2000-02; President, 1999-00
 President-elect, 1997-99; Chairman, Research Division Subcommittee, 1991
 University of Nebraska President's Advisory Council, 1998-07
 Center for Rural Affairs, Board of Directors, 2003-present
 Board Secretary, 2005-present
 Advisory Member, Center for Rural Affairs Family Farm Opportunities Project, 1996-03
 Chancellor's Committee of Visitors, University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1994-03; Chair, 1997-99
 External Partner, Leadership Team Nebraska Network 21, University of Nebraska, IANR, 1994-95
 Department Head Search Advisory Committee, Ag Econ Dept., 1993-95 and 2003-05
 University of Nebraska Agriculture Research Development Center Citizen's Liaison Committee, 1988-
 Board of Directors, Farmers Union Cooperative Company, Mead, NE, 1981-89
 President, 1987-89; Secretary, 1982-87
 Vice-President, Frontier Cooperative Company, Brainard, NE, 1990-94
 Land O'Lakes District 16 Board of Directors, 1989-98; President, 1995-98
 Land O'Lakes Policy and Resolutions Committee, 1988-96; Secretary, 1993-96
 Nebraska Cooperative Council Legislative Committee, 1984-86
 Nebraska Cooperative District 23 Council (Chair & Vice Chair (alt years), 1983-88
 Treasurer, Marietta Township Saunders County, Nebraska, 1991-03
 Co-Chairman, Saunders County, Nebraska S.T.A.R.T. Health Services Planning Committee, 1991-92
 Mead Public Schools Board of Education, 1997-04; President, 2001-02
 Mead Public Schools Negotiation Committee, 1997-99 & 03-04; Chair, 1999 & 2004
 Co-Chair, Mead Public Schools Strategic Planning Committee, 1995-96 & 2005-present
 Member, Mead Public Schools Advisory Committee, 1992-96
 Co-Chair, Mead Public Schools PTO, Omnibus Enrichment Program, 1988-91
 Chairman, Mead Public Schools Vocational Education Committee, 1986-89
 Governor's Commission for the Study of Higher Education, 1984
 Nebraska Leadership Education/Action Development (LEAD) Program Fellow , 1983-85

HONORS:

Nebraska Agribusiness Club Service to Agriculture, 2005
 Builders Award, University of Nebraska Board of Regents, 2004
 Honoree, Nebraska Agricultural Hall of Achievement, 2004
 Inductee, Nebraska Agricultural Hall of Achievement, 1996
 Nebraska-Iowa District Kiwanis Outstanding Farm Family, 1994
 Capital City Kiwanis Outstanding Farm Family, 1994
 Gamma Sigma Delta, 1967
 Alpha Zeta, 1966
 Alpha Tau Alpha

Peggy L. Hauschild

University of Nebraska Rural Initiative
103 Miller Hall
Lincoln, NE 68583-0710

Objective

Accuracy, clarity and thoroughness in all written tasks. Creativity and openness in all thinking tasks. Skilled and prompt clerical support of the work of colleagues and superiors.

Qualifications

A lifetime of interest in correct, communicative and thoughtful language, including the study of 4 foreign languages, with mastery of Spanish. Extensive multicultural work and interaction with immigrants to the U.S., plus European and Asian foreign travel/study. Extensive and varied K-12 and adult teaching of Spanish, English-as-a-Second Language and dance. 30 years of entrepreneurship in 3 small businesses — fireworks sales, horticulture services, and musical entertainment. Decades of public speaking and music/vocals/dance performance. 20 years of clerical, administrative, and database work experience. Wide-ranging familiarity with the University of Nebraska, including a B.A from UNL and employment in UNL's Ethnic Studies, Communication Studies, Libraries, and the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative.

Work History

2004-2008 **Data Coordinator**, University of Nebraska Rural Initiative

Create and maintain searchable database of all NU programs benefiting rural citizens;

Create and maintain current list of all Nebraska Rural Economic Development programs; website administration; Internet research; assistance with data collection and reporting of all Rural Initiative programs

2000-2002 **Database Assistant**, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

Data entry projects on ASA 400 database of 85,000 regulated environmental sites;

Training of DEQ employees on use of database; check-out, filing and database work with materials in DEQ projects library

1999-2000 **Secretary II**, UNL Department of Communications

Departmental reception & phones, textbook orders, office supply orders, teaching evaluation processing, graduate application processing, undergraduate advisors assistance, clerical support for faculty

1997-1999 **Secretary II**, UNL Institute for Ethnic Studies

Website creation & maintenance; budget analysis, calendar and correspondence for Director; event planning, office supply orders, textbook orders, reception & phones

Education

1969-1973 University of Nebraska-Lincoln, B.A. with double major in Spanish and Latin American Studies, 7-12 Nebraska Teaching Endorsement in Spanish 1973-1985

Kim R. Peterson

Work experience

2002 - Present **University of Nebraska Rural Initiative** **Lincoln, NE**

Coordinator

1992 - 2002 **University of Nebraska-SCREC** **Clay Center, NE**

Communications Coordinator

- **Graphic Design and Layout** — Responsible for producing many award-winning presentations, posters, newsletters, and other media graphic designs. Edited papers and materials for scientific publications edited and designed newsletters, posters, brochures, fliers. Wrote news releases for district and state publication.
- **Web Development** — Responsible for all graphic design, layout and implementation of the Center web site, as well as websites for each of the 22 county offices. Also developed websites for specific programs.
- **Public Relations** — Responsible for planning, management, coordination, and implementation of all activities surrounding field days, educational programs, demonstrations, and other activities at SCREC. Managed and marketed the public relations and educational programs for local, regional and national programs at the South Central Research and Extension Center. Full decision authority in matters of publicity, publications, and marketing promotion. Sole contact for news, radio, TV and other media personnel.
- **Computer Knowledge** — Extensive software knowledge, particularly PageMaker, Corel Draw, Powerpoint, Dreamweaver, Word, Word Perfect, PhotoShop, and numerous scanning and editing software. Responsible for scanning, digital images and photography of all projects. Proficient in web design, desktop layout and publishing, writing and editing.

1981 – 1992

Self-employed

Grafton, NE

Farming

- I managed and participated in the day-to-day activities of the family farming and cattle operation. During this time I also volunteered my expertise in organizing events for several local organizations.

1980 - 1981

Iron Man Industries Printing

Alliance, NE

Design/Layout and Computer Typesetter

- This position involved learning all the design and layout techniques as well as all aspects of the printing business.

1977 - 1980

Nebraska Stock Growers Assn

Alliance, NE

Communications Director

- Taped weekly radio spots; wrote weekly news releases; compiled and edited bi-weekly newsletter to membership; organized many meetings and PR for the annual conventions; considerable correspondence and meetings with legislators on legislative issues; wrote articles for the *Nebraska Cattleman* magazine; wrote, edited and produced narrative slide shows for beef promotion.

Education

1973 - 1977

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Lincoln, NE

B.S. in Agriculture/Animal Science

- Honors Convocation — was a member on the Dean's List all 4 years – named Superior Scholar and Top 10% Award from ASAS.
- Member of Mortar Board, Gamma Sigma Delta, Alpha Zeta, and Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Societies.

Awards Received

October, 2001 KUDOS Award from University of Nebraska Board of Regents

June/July, 1998 University of Nebraska Outstanding Employee Award

Member of Nebraska LEAD 18

May, 1977 Nebraska and National Outstanding Senior Award (Block & Bridle)

May, 1976 Nebraska and National Junior Activities Award (Block & Bridle)

Numerous college activities awards and scholarships; several University and national collegiate honors while on the Livestock and Meats Judging teams.

Sandra K. Scofield

Professional Experience:

- July 2002 - Present Director of the Nebraska Rural Initiative, a University of Nebraska system wide program created in 2002 to apply University knowledge and research to enhance the quality of life and the economy of non-metropolitan areas. Director is responsible for planning, organization, budgeting and management of this new program and works closely with Extension, faculty and students, national, state, and local government and NGO's on rural issues.
- 1998-2002 Director, Center for Science, Mathematics and Computer Education and Cooperative Extension Specialist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Directed activities that brought various colleges and departments together to provide professional development for teachers, enrichment activities for students, and support and coordination of activities to enhance undergraduate education. Worked in community development including the "Technologies Across Nebraska" initiative to raise awareness and provide training to rural areas on using technology for improving the economy and quality of life. Was PI on several grants including a \$17M Class.com project to develop web- based high school courses. Coordinated other successful grant applications and administered grants.
- 1993-1998 Project Director/Principal Investigator for Nebraska Math & Science Initiative, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A \$10 million National Science Foundation Statewide Systemic Initiative to improve math, science and technology education for K-16 students in Nebraska. Over 3000 K-12 teachers in Nebraska participated in professional development workshops and national award-winning distance learning materials in mathematics were produced.
- 1992-1993 Special Assistant to the Governor for Planning and Budget, Lincoln, NE. Responsible for directing the Strategic Planning and Budget process for Governor Nelson.
- 1991-1992 Chief of Staff, Governor's Office. Supervised organization of newly elected governor's office. Supervised drafting and introduction of Governor's Legislative Package including the FY 91-93 budget.
- 1983-1990 State Senator, 49th District, Northwest Nebraska. Member of the Appropriations Committee; Chair of Select Committee on Children and Families; Vice-Chair of Select Committee on Economic Development; Vice-Chair of National Conference of State Legislatures Committee on Agriculture, Food Policy, and Rural Development.
- 1983 Director, Career Development Center, Chadron State College, Chadron, Nebraska. Organized a new center for career counseling and related services. Worked with incoming freshmen as well as adults who were making career changes as a result of the weak farm economy.
- 1979-1981 Director of Planning, Chadron State College. Directed a federal grant to design and coordinate a campus-wide planning process; consulted internally on organizational development and fund raising.
- 1978 and 1982 Career Counselor, Chadron State College. Provided educational, career and personal counseling to students and off-campus adults. Served as Acting Director of Student Services Project; wrote grants; and developed television and print advertising.

- 1976-1977 Planning Director, Northwest Nebraska Community Action Council, Chadron, NE. Directed agency planning process; supervised agency grant writing and staff development.
- 1975-1976 Television Writer, University of Mid-America, Lincoln, NE. Worked on a team to create a college level instructional television series on accounting as a part of the SUN project. .
- 1974-1975 Educational Consultant, Nebraska Department of Education. Designed, researched and wrote a national award-winning television series on Consumer Education; developed accompanying teachers' guide; ran workshops for teachers.
- 1974 Planning Consultant, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. Provided technical planning and writing assistance to Governor's Committee in preparing the Adult Parole section of a statewide corrections plan.
- 1971-1973 Technical Writer, Kentron International (a subsidiary of LTV), Honolulu, Hawaii. Coordinated activities of the technical reports section of the Data Reduction Department for engineering, aerospace and defense projects; wrote and edited technical and non-technical materials.
- 1969-1971 Teacher, Westside High School, Omaha, NE. Taught economics, psychology and history. Coordinated the Developmental Economics Education Program.

Education:

- M. A. University of Nebraska-Lincoln (1974), Educational Psychology and Measurements. Graduate work in Business, (1972) University of Hawaii
- B. S. University of Nebraska-Lincoln (1969), Social Sciences and Education

Campus, Community, State and Regional Leadership and Service:

President, Nebraska Association of Former State Legislators

Fellow, University of Nebraska Center for Great Plains Studies

Member, Nebraska Unicameral Club

Board Member, Nebraska Rural Development Commission

Member, Rotary International, Club 14, Lincoln, NE

Board Member, Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)

Member, Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement

Member, Partnership for Rural Nebraska

Formerly: Board Member of Nebraska EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research); Advisory Council, High Plains Consortium on Mathematics and Science Education for Mid-Continent Research on Education and Learning Laboratory in Denver; Commissioner and Chair, Midwestern Higher Education Commission; Board Member, Groundwater Foundation; Board Member, Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance; Board of Trustees, Nebraska Public Radio Foundation; Board member, Nebraska 4-H Foundation; Member, UNL Kellogg Leadership Initiative. Owner/Manager of Scofield Farm. Participate in surrounding rural neighborhood activities.

Walter W. Stroup

Curriculum Vita

Current Position: Professor and Chair, Department of Statistics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Ph.D.: Statistics, University of Kentucky, 1979

M.S.: Statistics, University of Kentucky, 1975

A.B.: Psychology, Antioch College, 1973

Positions held:

University of Nebraska, Dept. of Statistics, Professor and Chair, 2003-present

University of Nebraska, Biometry Dept., Asst/Assoc/Full Professor, 1979-2003; interim dept. head, 1987-88; dept head, 2001-2003, acting director, Division of Statistics, Math & Stat Dept, 2002-2003

University of Tennessee, Statistics Dept., visiting Assoc Prof, (sabbatical), 1989; participant in Management Development Center at Tennessee (involved statistical process control, quality improvement, & management aspects)

Hollins College (Roanoke, VA), Statistics Dept., visiting asst. prof., 1978-79

Professional Societies:

American Statistical Association

International Biometric Society

American Association for the Advancement of Science

Sigma Xi

Administrative accomplishment: as chair of UNL Biometry department and director of Math & Stat division of statistics, presided over merger of these two units to create UNL Department of Statistics

Research interests: generalized mixed models; design of experiments; multi-location trials; spatial statistics; statistical education, especially training and continuing education for stat consultants & educators and for Math-Science Partnerships in K-16 education; statistical process improvement

Publications: co-authored *SAS System for Mixed Models* (1996, Littell, Milliken, Stroup & Wolfinger, SAS Institute, Cary, NC), *SAS for Mixed Models, 2nd ed.* (2006, Littell, Milliken, Schabenberger, Stroup & Wolfinger), and *SAS for Linear Models, 4th ed.* (2002, Littell, Stroup & Freund, Wiley, NY/SAS, Cary, NC co-publication) ; journal articles in *Communications in Statistics*, *American Statistician*, *J. of Agricultural, Biological & Environmental Statistics*, *J. of Animal Science*, *Agronomy Journal*, *Crop Science*, *HortScience*, *Canadian J. of Forestry*, *Range Management*, *J. of Plant Nutrition*, articles & book chapters in several other publications. *SAS for Mixed Models* has become a standard text for analysis and interpretation of data using mixed models.

Current research: design & estimation issues in stability trials and shelf-life determination; small sample behavior of mixed model procedures used designed experiments and randomized trials typical of studies conducted in biological, pharmaceutical, agricultural, and social sciences; inference space in multi-location trials (e.g. multi-clinic trials, multi-school evaluation; on-farm trials, etc); use of generalized, mixed & nonlinear models and computer assisted design for multi-factor dose-response studies; power analysis and design assessment using generalized mixed model theory and methods;

statistical curriculum development and methods to assess impact in K-16 Math-Science education projects; intersection of writing-statistics-math-science in K-20 education; adapting statistical process improvement concepts to public policy – particular emphasis on issues concerning rural Great Plains.

Mixed model development: As member of USSES (University Statisticians of Southern Experiment Stations), participated in USDA-sponsored regional project to develop mixed model applications. Resulted in publication *Mixed Models in Agriculture and Related Disciplines*. Following project, along with USSES colleagues at Tennessee and Florida, worked with SAS⁷ in development of PROC MIXED. Continuing active involvement in evolution of MIXED and extension to GLIMMIX and NLMIXED. Developed three new courses at UNL [Mixed Model Analysis (Stat 892), Advanced Statistical Modeling (Stat971)], and undergraduate Design & Analysis of Experiments (Stat 412). Two significant revisions of Design and Analysis of Experiments (Stat 802): first, extensive use of SAS (1980's); second, in 1990's to incorporate mixed model thought process. Currently involved in PQRI (Pharmaceutical Product Quality Research Institute) Stability Shelf Life Working Group: charge is to develop improved methods to estimate shelf-life, including incorporation of mixed model methods. Writers Inquiry Group (partnership of UNL statistics & English departments) extensive revision of statistics MS curriculum draws on both writing across the disciplines and generalized & mixed model concepts.

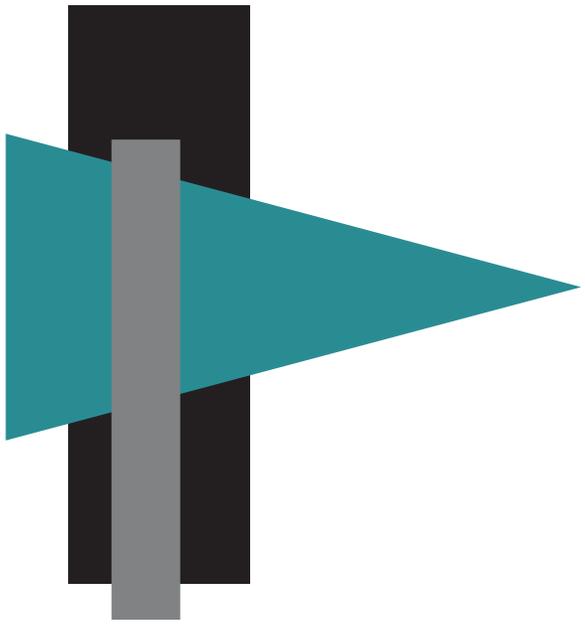
Mixed model presentations: taught invited course A Generalized Mixed Models@ for graduate credit at University of Oslo/Agricultural University of Norway, June 2003; invited short courses and workshops for ENAR, Nordic Region of International Biometric Society, Belgian Stat. Assoc., University of Hannover (Germany), various ASA chapters; short courses and workshops for various industry & government clients, including FDA/CVM, Pfizer, Upjohn, Dow Agro, Intel, Sematech, and ag research facilities in developing countries - Morocco, Niger, Burundi; several invited presentations at ASA, ENAR, German Biometric Society, Great Lakes Statistics symposium, Rothamstead Exp. Station (U.K.), Agronomy Society of America, International Society for Horticultural Science.

Consultant for various animal health pharmaceutical concerns; for University of Tennessee middle school achievement test assessment of school and teacher performance; for agricultural development projects in Morocco, Burundi, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali; part of UNL-Biometry responsibility is to provide stat support & collaboration for UNL Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources (formerly the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station) including College of Agricultural Science and Natural Resources and College of Human Resources and Family Science. Currently leading multi-department effort to establish a Core Facility to support Survey, Statistics, and Psychometric aspects of research in the social and behavioral sciences at UNL.

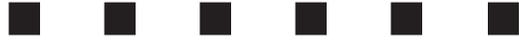
Courses taught: intro to statistics (three versions: undergrad pre-calculus, undergrad calculus-based, graduate-level pre-calculus); design and analysis of experiments (two courses – one grad level, other undergraduate); advanced design of experiments; categorical data analysis; linear models; advanced statistical modeling (created course); introduction to mixed model analysis (created course); regression analysis; mathematical statistics and probability; multivariate analysis; statistical methods for pharmaceutical workers (created course); introduction to statistical consulting; variance component estimation; generalized mixed models (created course)

Coordinator: of GTA's for undergraduate introductory statistics course (Stat 218); of grad students in statistical consulting practicum (Stat 997; Statistics Department Help Desk)

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Appendices



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