

2006

Omtvedt Innovation Award

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Omtvedt Innovation Award
Presented to Jim Goeke
Gudmundsen Laboratory 25th Anniversary and Open House
August 30, 2006

It is such a pleasure to be here at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory Open House! Not only are we celebrating the 25th anniversary of the contributions and successes of this "expansive" research and extension laboratory, we are also "honoring" one of our own faculty members today with this Omtvedt Innovation Award. This award is made possible because of the "generosity" of Leone and the late Neal Harlan, great friends of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Harlans had the vision and foresight to realize the importance of recognizing and supporting outstanding and innovative work in the Institute, and honored Irv Omtvedt on his retirement as Vice Chancellor of the Institute by supporting the Omtvedt Innovation Awards. These awards "recognize" areas of strength and promise within the Institute, as well as "innovative" research and programming by our faculty, staff, and students.

We are very fortunate to have had ^{ON OUR FACULTY} [REDACTED] for more than three decades a vibrant contributor to the study of hydrology and a "real expert" in the application of this science.

Professor Jim Goeke, would you come forward please?

Jim has been a hydrogeologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for [REDACTED] 36 years, 30 at the West Central Research and Extension Center, "headquartered" in North Platte and which encompasses this wonderful 12,500-acre research laboratory. He has done so as ^{a key} part of the Conservation and Survey Division, [REDACTED] within the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Jim's expertise about the High Plains, ^{Aquifer} or Ogallala Aquifer, is known throughout the country. Certainly here in Nebraska, when we say 'Mr. Groundwater,' many of us are speaking with the "highest regard" about Jim. He is THE point person and THE expert on this "wondrous resource" that has enabled our state to take its place as a "key" national producer of grain and livestock.

Because Jim is a well-known groundwater geologist, he gets to talk a lot about it! He gives an estimated 50 presentations "annually" to many diverse audiences -- school children, well-drillers, and attorneys, to name just a few. He was on the Nebraska Attorney General's Expert Witness Team for the Republican River Compact Defense. Jim also works extensively with Natural Resources Districts, landowners, and irrigators.

He is "passionate" about his craft.

Jim lives his belief that the university has a "responsibility" to obtain detailed and accurate data for surface water and - groundwater "models" so that scientists, industry, policy-makers, and the public-at-large can "better-understand" the elements that comprise the hydrologic cycle. This means that the university then can "share" that information so that others, "both" public and - private, can make "wise-decisions" and enable us all to be more responsible consumers of this precious resource.

In addition, since 1986, Jim has "monitored" one of two Nebraska acid-rain stations, as part of the National Trends

Network, a cooperative venture with the U.S. Geological Survey.

Not only is Jim a highly-regarded water “expert”, he also is a valued-member of the North Platte-area community and a genuinely nice person who would give you the shirt off his back. He is especially active in a variety of organizations, including the North Platte Civil Service Commission, the Twin Platte NRD stakeholders group, and serves as the “university liaison” with the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, to name just a few. Jim is a former-member of the board of directors for the North Platte Public Schools Foundation and is on the advisory board for the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. In fact, in 1995 he received two tree-related awards, the Tree Planters State Award and the State Foresters Award.

As one might suspect, Jim has been “highly involved” with the Nebraska Groundwater Foundation. He was honored with that organization's Maurice Kremer Groundwater-Achievement-Award in 2001 for his research and lifelong interest in the Sandhills and the High Plains Aquifer.

I am especially pleased to add "another" well-deserved award
for his wonderful dedication. Congratulations Jim!

JIM GOETE

REGENT CHAIRMAN JIM McCLURG

LEE HARLAIN