

2008

2008 Water Colloquium

John Owens

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, jowens2@unl.edu

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HARDIN HALL
CLARK

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2008 Water Colloquium
Hardin Hall

8:30 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 16, 2008

John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

LORRIE

It is my very great pleasure to have this opportunity to welcome you to the 2008 Water Colloquium, hosted by our Water Center and the Water Resources Research Initiative here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

There is no question water is a key element to success - to say nothing of survival! - here in Nebraska and beyond. As such, our state's land-grant university is much-concerned with water. We are not the only ones; we all know water, both quantity and quality, is a critical concern in today's world.

Certainly water is, and long has been, a topic of due diligence among our faculty in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and throughout the university. In the Institute, our research, teaching, and extension education programs closely entwine to provide new knowledge people can put to use in their lives. That new knowledge is carried across Nebraska through extension education, and taught in our classrooms and laboratories.

Nebraska has nearly 24,000 miles of rivers and streams, and of course we are highly fortunate to sit over "aquifers" that, if poured over the surface of our state, would have a depth of 37.9 feet. Nebraska is second in the nation in amount of irrigated land, with over 7.6 million acres. Of Nebraska's total cropland "harvested" about 43 percent is irrigated. Nebraska's farms and ^{comprise some} ranches ~~are~~ 45.6 million acres, or 93 percent of Nebraska's total land area.

You "likely know" - in fact, I hope a number of you were there to see it in person - this year at the Husker Harvest Days Farm Progress Show in Grand Island we highlighted water research, ^{water} education, and ^{water} extension programming as we "unveiled" a new look for the university's building there. You'll be seeing "more" ^{area} theme-based focus from us at Husker Harvest Days in the future. We chose water as our topic this first year of the university's "new look" at Husker Harvest Days because of its tremendous importance to our state and, indeed, the world.

A number of people helped make this first theme-focused year so successful for us at Husker Harvest Days; certainly the faculty and staff who were there staffing water-related exhibits played a huge role, as did Steve Ress, Husker Harvest Days coordinator. I know also that members of our Communications and Information Technology unit contributed key time and talent, and I thank everyone - absolutely everyone - who was involved. It was such a pleasure to me to stand in our building and see visitors there interacting with all university faculty and staff in the various attractive exhibits, asking questions, and gaining information. There was a tremendous turnout, and a number of really positive things were said about the new look and the work we're doing in water, both from visitors and from various media that covered the event.

All THINGS WATER at UNL!

I hope you're also aware of and using the new water Web site that provides access to a wide variety of university expertise on water issues. Water.unl.edu (<http://water.unl.edu>) was developed by research and extension experts from many water-related disciplines here at the university. It is absolutely vital that Nebraskans have unbiased, research-based information to help them make the best decisions possible about how to manage this valuable natural resource for the many uses we have for it. We continue to add information to the site, and hope you'll use and recommend it often.

Today offers a tremendous opportunity to be part of a thought-provoking, enjoyable day of exciting oral and poster presentations from a tremendous variety of experts. It's also a great time to mark your calendars for the Platte River Symposium scheduled for Oct. 14-15 next year, 2009, in Kearney. Enjoy your day! It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome you here. Thank you.

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