

Spring 2006

NAC Speakers' Bureau – Last Call For Participants

This is your last chance to get your name in the NAC Speakers' Bureau directory for this year. "We would like you to consider this because many organizations throughout the state are looking for individuals to speak on various topics," NAC President Craig Buescher said. See the enclosed Speakers' Bureau form to volunteer.

Thanks to these NAC members who have signed on for the Speakers' Bureau as of Feb. 1:

Sallie Adkins, executive director, Nebraska Beef Council

Tim Anderson, public relations manager, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

Craig Buescher, president, Nebraska AgRelations Council

Eugene Glock, farmer and Nebraska Water Quality Task Force member

Paul Hay, extension educator

Larry Hudkins, Lancaster County commissioner

Don Hutchens, executive director, Nebraska Corn Board

Kirk Jamison, executive director, Nebraska 4-H Foundation

Chris Kalkowski, agribusiness loan officer

Bryce Neidig, past president, Nebraska Farm Bureau

Carl Sousek, farmer near Prague

NAC Leadership

Craig Buescher, Deweese...president

Cheryl Stubbendieck, Lincoln...president-elect

Ted Hartung, Lincoln...executive secretary

Larry Bitney, Lincoln...treasurer

Nancy Eberle, Bradshaw

Larry Hudkins, Malcom

Gary Bergman, Lincoln

Duane Eversoll, Lincoln...ex officio

Eddie Biwer, Omaha

Paul Hay, Beatrice

Lowell Schardt, Wayne

The Nebraska AgRelations Council works to promote the importance of agriculture to all Nebraskans. NAC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, volunteer-run organization that serves as an umbrella to bring together organizations and individuals to speak out on behalf of agriculture.

NAC's mission is "To Communicate the Story of Nebraska Agriculture Through the Maximum Use of Media."

Newsletter courtesy of
Nebraska Farm Bureau

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or (preferably) cheryls@nefb.org

Irrigation Added \$4.5 Billion to Nebraska's Economy in 2003

Lincoln – Use of irrigation in Nebraska in 2003 added \$4.5 billion to the state's economy – equivalent to one-and-a-half times the state's annual budget.

Irrigation also was responsible for creation of 45,000 jobs in the state in 2003, according to the study, "Economic Importance of Irrigated Agriculture 2003," released Oct. 31 by the Nebraska Policy Institute.

Dr. Charles Lamphear, University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor emeritus and former director of UNL's Bureau of Business Research, was the principal researcher for the study. Dr. Roy Frederick, UNL professor emeritus of agricultural economics; and Dr. Dale Flowerday, UNL professor emeritus of agronomy, contributed to the study.

The study measured the value of crop output (the direct effect), business-to-business purchases generated by crop production (the indirect effect), and the economic activity generated from the personal spending of earned income (consumption effect). The net total economic impact of \$4.5 billion was determined by comparing the impacts with irrigation to the impacts that would have resulted without irrigation.

Lamphear calculated both actual 2003 impacts and what models would predict

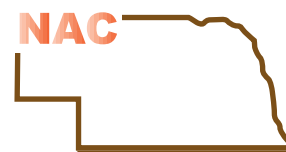
for 2003 if it had been a normal precipitation year. In the normal year scenario, the total impact of irrigation would have been just over \$3.6 billion. However, because 2003 was a drought year, total economic impact was slightly more than \$4.5 billion.

Next Ag Adventure Tour

NAC is a financial sponsor of the Ag Adventure Tour, an event planned and conducted by the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association. This year's tour will be July 14 and 15, according to Nancy Eberle, LEAD Alumni executive secretary. Invited guests are members of the Lincoln and Omaha city leadership programs.

The two-day bus tour is tentatively titled "The BLT Tour," Eberle said, for "Beatrice, Lincoln and Tecumseh." Preliminary plans call for visiting farms, agribusinesses and institutions in southeast Nebraska, with a focus on economic development in the area. Presentations on the bus during travel time will discuss a variety of ag-related topics. The tour can accommodate about 50 persons, including guests, LEAD alums and others, including NAC's representatives. To suggest tour sites or for more information, contact Eberle at eg55038@alltel.net.

www.neagrelations.org



Nebraska AgRelations Council

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Spring 2006

NAC Calendar

March 8 – NAC Board of Directors meeting, Holiday Inn, Kearney, 4 to 6 p.m. All NAC members welcome!

March 8 & 9 – Governor's Ag Conference, Holiday Inn, Kearney

March 10 – LEAD Graduation – East Campus Union

Presentation of complimentary one-year NAC memberships to LEAD XXIV fellows.

March 16 – Ag Builders' Legislative Day at the State Capitol

March 19-26 – National Agriculture Week

March 20 – National Agriculture Week Banquet, Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center near Gretna

Sept. 13 – NAC Awards Banquet, Mid-Town Holiday Inn, Grand Island

Nov. 2 – Ag at the Crossroads Conference, East Union, Lincoln

Dec. 13 & 14 – Nebraska Ag Classic, Holiday Inn, Kearney



Nebraska AgRelations Council President Craig Buescher (left) presented NAC's 2006 Nebraska AgRelations Award to State Sen. Roger Wehrbein of Plattsmouth during awards ceremonies at the Dec. 14 Ag Classic Conference in Kearney.

First Ag Classic a Big Success

The first Nebraska Ag Classic, held Dec. 14 and 15 in Kearney, was a big success, according to the conference planning committee chair, NAC board member Nancy Eberle. NAC was one of 11 ag organizations joining for the conference. Evaluations completed by participants rated the conference very highly, Eberle said.

The Classic attracted 452 pre-registrants but participants numbered 511 by the second day – a much bigger crowd than the participating

organizations had been able to attract to their individual meetings, she said. NAC's 2006 annual meeting was held Dec. 14 as part of the conference, with nearly 50 members attending. Attendance at a joint luncheon sponsored by NAC and Nebraska LEAD Alumni drew a crowd of 80.

NAC plans to continue to hold its annual meeting as part of the Ag Classic. The next Ag Classic will be Dec. 13 and 14, 2006, Eberle said.

Welcome New NAC Board Members

Three new members of the NAC Board of Directors were elected for three-year terms at the 2006 Annual Meeting. Eddie Biwer of Omaha is retired from Best Foods; Paul Hay of Beatrice is an extension educator; and Lowell Schardt owns The Seed Source, a seed distribution business in Wayne.

NAC Supports Increasing Senators' Salaries

NAC members who attended the 2006 NAC annual meeting on Dec. 14 in Kearney voted to support Amendment 1 to increase state senators' salaries, if NAC's corporate documents allow such actions. The NAC board determined that NAC could endorse the amendment and formally adopted a position of support at its Jan. 18 meeting.

Amendment 1 would increase salaries to \$21,000 effective in 2007, then provide for annual cost-of-living increases. The measure will be on the May 9 primary ballot.

President's Message



What a winter this has been! Or can we call it a winter? With 51 consecutive days above normal, we can look back at this past winter as a record breaker....one to tell the kids and grandkids about, how we remember the good ole winter of 2005-2006. Now we can only hope that we get some moisture this spring to offset the absence of snow in most areas of the state.

It has been two months since the Nebraska Ag Classic and still I hear rave reviews about how the conference exceeded all expectations. There were nearly 60 booths for the trade show for attendees to visit and the speakers offered valuable information for all of us to digest. With 11 groups working together to pull it off, it only shows what we can do when we work together. Special thanks to Nancy Eberle for her work in facilitating the group and to Cindi Jisa and Ginger Hartman for all the work they did to pull this off.

The Nebraska AgRelations Council Board of Directors was very happy to have chosen to be part of this endeavor because it was also a success for our organization. The visibility we received for NAC was great and the potential to continue to grow this conference is encouraging. In fact, since the Ag Classic made a profit, we won't need to put in seed money for next year. We had an Ag Classic Wrap-up

meeting on Jan. 24 and went over what worked and areas we have to work on. We all realized there would be some glitches this first year, but by working together we will be able to have a bigger and better show next year.

At our NAC board meeting on Jan. 18, we voted to give financial support for the new group called A-FAN, the Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska. This group was patterned after a similar group in Iowa, "the Coalition To Support Iowa's Farmers," that was formed to help farmers who want to expand their livestock operations. Because our mission is to promote agriculture, we chose to get behind this group and donated \$1,000 toward the financing of A-FAN. We will continue to give you updates on what the A-FAN organization is doing and how you might be able to assist this group in your area of the state.

I would like to invite you to our next board meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the Governor's Ag Conference in Kearney at the Holiday Inn on March 8 and 9. Our board meeting will be held at 4 p.m. on March 8 at the Holiday Inn. Check the kiosk at the Holiday Inn for the room number of the meeting.

The AgRelations Council is only as strong as the membership, so I challenge you to become involved in whatever areas interest you. We are looking for members to help on various committees and to become members of the Speakers Bureau. Your annual membership is due now, so if you haven't paid it, please do so before March 15 because we want to print our membership directory at the end of March. Please contact me or any of the board

2006 Ag at the Crossroads Conference

The 2006 Ag at the Crossroads Conference, sponsored by NAC and the UNL Department of Agricultural Economics, will be Thursday, Nov. 2 at the East Campus Union in Lincoln.

The conference will focus on alternative energy, with a presentation related to the 2007 farm bill at lunch. Give your ideas

for topics or speakers to one of these planning committee members: Ted Hartung, Allen Blezek, Craig Buescher, Dennis Conley, Nancy Eberle, Mark Gustafson, Bruce Johnson, Cheryl Stubbendieck, Roger Wehrbein, Paul Hay or Duane Eversoll. The committee will begin meeting in March.

members if you would like to help out in any program area. Your talents are what make this organization great.

— Craig Buescher, President

You're Invited To the National Ag Week Banquet

All NAC members are cordially invited to attend the 2006 National Agriculture Week Banquet, to be held March 20 at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center near Gretna. The banquet is a project of the Omaha Agri-Business Club and the Lincoln-based Nebraska Agribusiness Club. National Ag Week highlights the importance of agriculture to all Americans.

The evening begins with a no-host social hour and silent auction at 5:45 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner and the evening's program at 6:45 p.m. Ken Root, now lead farm broadcaster at WHO radio in Des Moines, is the featured speaker. Root was the original host of AgriTalk, the first interactive talk radio program for agriculture and rural America.

The Omaha Agri-Business Club will present its Agribusiness Leadership Award at the dinner to Ken Pohlman of Omaha. He is president of Midwest Laboratories and is an NAC member. Proceeds from the Silent Auction will benefit the Nebraska 4-H Foundation, Nebraska FFA, Agriculture in the Classroom, the Ag Awareness Coalition, and Nebraska LEAD. To contribute an item for the auction, call Eddie Biwer at 402/389-2807. Cash contributions are also welcome.

To reserve for the banquet, contact Millie Speck at Midwest Laboratories, 402/334-7770 or millie@midwestlabs.com. Banquet tickets are \$22; reservation deadline is March 16.



NAC board members elected at the 2006 annual meeting in December met in Lincoln Jan. 18 to make plans for the year. In the back row from left are: Larry Hudkins of Malcolm, Paul Hay of Beatrice, Gary Bergman of Lincoln, Lowell Schardt of Wayne and Craig Buescher of Deweese. Shown front row from left are: Duane Eversoll of Lincoln; Eddie Biwer of Omaha; Nancy Eberle of Bradshaw; and Larry Bitney, Ted Hartung and Cheryl Stubbendieck, all of Lincoln.

NAC Contributes \$1,000 to A-FAN

NAC is contributing \$1,000 to a new organization, the Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska – A-FAN. The group will help farmers spread the word about the economic and social importance of agriculture and livestock to Nebraska communities, A-FAN President Rod Johnson said Dec. 2. Johnson is also executive director of the Nebraska Pork Producers Association. His organization and the Nebraska Cattlemen, Nebraska Corn Growers Association, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska Poultry Industries and the Nebraska Soybean Association formed A-FAN in October.

"There is a real need to tell the story about the importance of agriculture and livestock farming in our state," Johnson said. "We've watched the number of producers and livestock decline in Nebraska over the last decade and those declines have resulted in lost market opportunities for Nebraska-grown grains and ultimately, economic losses to our rural communities."

Scott Merritt, A-FAN treasurer and Nebraska Corn Growers Association executive director, said A-FAN will tell agriculture's story by taking the message to the local community level by working with farmers and ranchers. Its goal is to be the first to provide direct,

one-to-one assistance to individual farmers as they work to modernize their agricultural operations.

A-FAN will assist farmers by helping them engage and inform neighbors and the community about their agricultural ventures and the importance of those ventures to the local economy. "We want to help farmers to be better neighbors and avoid conflicts to the point where we're uniting and building rural communities through agriculture. A-FAN was founded to find and implement solutions," Merritt said.

Johnson said A-FAN is incorporated and is "actively working to secure investments in the organization to move from a

concept to a reality. This will require enlisting the help of agriculture leaders and others who share our desire to ensure a future for Nebraska agriculture."

Other members of the A-FAN Board of Directors are Michael Kelsey, executive director of Nebraska Cattlemen; Susan Joy, executive director of Nebraska Poultry Industries, Lori Luebbe, executive director of the Nebraska Soybean Association; and Rob Robertson, vice president/governmental relations for Nebraska Farm Bureau.

Craig Head of Nebraska Farm Bureau is serving as A-FAN's interim executive director. He can be reached at 402/421-4435 or craigh@nefb.org.

Nominations Needed for Nebraska AgRelations Award

NAC is seeking nominations for its Nebraska AgRelations Award, to be presented on Sept. 13 at a dinner in Grand Island in conjunction with Husker Harvest Days.

Roger Wehrbein, the 2006 honoree, was recognized at the December 2005 Ag Classic Conference in December, in conjunction with NAC's annual meeting. This year, the new honoree will be recognized with tributes at the Sept. 13 dinner and introduced briefly at the 2006 Ag Classic.

Please use the enclosed form to nominate a candidate for the AgRelations Award.