



New Lt. Governor Understands Rural Health Concerns

Nebraska Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy has first-hand knowledge about delivering health care in rural Nebraska.

“We are pleased with Mr. Sheehy’s appointment to lieutenant governor,” said Roxanna Jokela, director of the Rural Health Education



Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy

Network and deputy director of the Nebraska Area Health Education Centers program. “He has been an advocate for rural health, active in the NeRHA over the past 10 years and most recently served as the legislative chair for the association.”

A Hastings native, Sheehy took office in January after former Lt. Gov. Dave Heineman assumed the role of governor for the departing Mike Johanns, who is now the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Sheehy has more than two decades of experience in health care, working as a paramedic in Hastings. He worked for Rural/Metro Ambulance, starting in 1982 as an emergency medical technician and became Rural/Metro’s para-

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Nebraska Lands National Rural Health Education Convention

“We got it! We got it!” sang out Roxanna Jokela, director of the Rural Health Education Network and deputy director of the Nebraska Area Health Education Centers program, as she danced through the office.

“We beat out Las Vegas!” Jokela and the AHEC Centers submitted a proposal last fall to the National AHEC Organization (NAO) to host its 2006 Annual Conference.

NAO chose Omaha over Las Vegas and now the work begins in earnest.

After the staff celebrated its good fortune and the excitement began to wind down, it dawned on them all. There would be *a lot* of work to do between now and June 2006. Not just for

the staff in Omaha, but also for the staff of Nebraska’s three AHECs, who will be an integral part of the planning and implementation processes.

Meetings have already been held with the Hilton Hotel and Qwest Center. Contracts are being negotiated and sites for activities scouted out.

Approximately 700 individuals from across the country will visit Omaha June 10-14, 2006, for the NAO Conference.

Attendees will experience a week of education, networking opportunities, absorbing new ideas and seeing old friends. Attendees also will have an opportunity to enjoy the array of activities Omaha has to offer, such as a trip to Henry Doorly Zoo, attending a baseball game, enjoying the Joslyn or just shopping and eating out.

The NAO Conference will bring

AHEC program directors, center directors, program coordinators, board members and other individuals to Omaha to learn about the latest innovations in health professions education.

Model programs and new theories on adult and student learning styles will be presented, and leadership

sessions will be held for board members and new directors.

Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) provide health professions education assistance in their communities. Nebraska’s three AHECs provide a wide range of activities geared to K-12 students that encourage their interest in health careers.

The AHECs sponsor job shadowing programs, career fairs, community

Approximately 700 people from across the country will visit Omaha for the National AHEC Organization conference in 2006.

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Sheehy Visits UNMC

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medic field supervisor two years later, and the market general manager in 1987. He held that position until his appointment as lieutenant governor.

Sheehy said access to medical care in a rural community is very important.

“In Nebraska, citizens rely upon the delivery of certain services and programs, such as education and basic health care, to sustain a certain quality of life,” he said. “UNMC, through its programs in rural medicine, has been a major player in helping to ensure rural residents continue to have access to those services.”



Todd Wyatt, Ph.D., left, associate professor of pulmonary and critical care medicine, explains the functions of some of the equipment in his pulmonary lab to Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy.

Working Together to Make a Difference

“What is the difference between RHEN and AHEC?”

Every once-in-a-while this question is asked of me.

Simply put, the mission of RHEN and AHEC are one in the same: to provide a health care workforce for rural Nebraska.

The Rural Health Education Network (RHEN) began in the early 1990s with support from the Nebraska Legislature.

It is part of UNMC’s commitment to rural outreach.

By partnering with communities across the state, UNMC developed a volunteer faculty network, who serve as preceptors for health profession students. This allows students to receive part of their professional education in sites away from the main UNMC campuses.

The initial focus of RHEN, to develop health profession student training off campus, broadened in 1993 when UNMC embarked on an even greater challenge: to encourage students from rural communities to consider a career in health care.

Our first programs – the regional and state eighth-grade science meets aimed

Roxanna Jokela

Director, Rural Health Education Network
Deputy Director, Nebraska AHEC Program Offices



at meeting this goal – continue today with many of our past participants going on to be health professionals!

At the same time that RHEN was developing, a special initiative – the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) – was beginning as a partnership with Wayne and Chadron State Colleges.

RHOP is recognized as a successful program with more than 70 percent of its graduates working in rural communities.

While UNMC had developed a national reputation for its outreach programs, there was still a need for something more. Trying to reach across a 500-mile state to work with communities was more than a reasonable challenge and yet continual contact with communities was essential in the overall goal to “grow our own” health care professionals.

In 1999, UNMC applied for (and received) federal funding from the Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA) to help in carrying out its mission of recruiting and retaining rural health care providers.

In 2001 the first Area Health Education Center opened. Today there are three AHECs.

In parts of the state that do not yet have an AHEC, we continue to work to meet their needs and lobby for the funds to cover all areas of the state.

While the RHEN office developed the foundation for the successful programs Nebraska has today, the AHECs have lent the local flavor and are able to tailor programs to meet the needs of individual communities.

Together we have made a difference.



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Harold M. Maurer, M.D., Chancellor

Michael Sitorius, M.D.,
Director, Nebraska AHEC
Program Office

Roxanna Jokela, RHEN Director and
Deputy Director of the Nebraska AHEC
Program Office

Robyn Henderson
Assistant RHEN Director

Liliana Bronner and Ann Kraft,
Program Coordinators

Lisa Spellman, Editor
phone: (402) 559-4693
e-mail: lspellman@unmc.edu

National Convention

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health fairs, science meets and a variety of other activities that introduce the wide array of positions available within the health career cluster.

The AHECs also work with health providers already in the community by coordinating continuing education credit courses and engaging them as preceptors and supervisors for visiting students. Students from UNMC who go to rural communities for their rotations may also be assisted by the AHECs. Stayed tuned to FOCUS for ongoing news and developments!

Assoc. Dean to Retire

Mary Haven, associate dean of the University of Nebraska Medical Center's School of Allied Health Professions will step down after 10 years of service at the end of June, or when a successor is found.

The timing is good, Haven said. "The school is doing very well. We have strong academic programs and have increased our grant funding substantially. Federal funding has increased from less than \$100,000 to more than \$1.25 million. It is now time for a new leader to build on these successes."



Mary Haven

Haven joined UNMC on March 1, 1968, as a clinical chemist in pathology-microbiology and medical technology. She became associate dean in 1995, succeeding Reba Benschoter, Ph.D., who also spent 10 years in the role.

During her tenure, Haven has expanded the distance-learning program. By this fall, SAHP will have four programs offered by distance learning: medical technology, radiation therapy, radiography and cytotechnology.

"We've been able to reach rural Nebraska and fulfill the needs of Nebraskans through distance education," she said.

Bioterrorism Symposia Well Received

More than 150 individuals gathered in Lincoln March 23 and 24 for the first of four statewide symposia on bioterrorism.

Nebraska's Gov. Dave Heineman and Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy opened the event, which was attended by nurses, physicians, public health officials, EMTs and other emergency first responders. Approximately one-third of the audience represented rural areas of the state.

Gov. Heineman noted that conferences such as these are an important venue for educating the state's emergency personnel and others who may be first responders to natural disasters such as the tornado in Hallam, or to threats of terrorism – biological or otherwise.

Sheehy, who also serves as the Director of Nebraska's Homeland Security Office, is no stranger to disaster and destruction. As a trained EMT, Sheehy has considerable experience in responding to and analyzing situations for potential harm.

"This kind of training is vital to any one involved in public health and safety," Sheehy said.

During a session on preparing for and responding to attacks on the drinking water supply, speaker Joe Golden, a certified environmental trainer and hazardous material manager from New York, noted that such concerns predat-

ed the Sept. 11 attack.

In fact, J. Edgar Hoover was quoted as stating that the vulnerability of the nation's water supply to contamination by the enemy was a long standing concern. Current efforts to protect the water system actually started under the Clinton administration with a presidential directive on critical infrastructure.

During a discussion on bombs and blast injuries, Lt. Rod Getting, of the Nebraska State Patrol, pleaded with the audience: "Please don't try to make our job easier! Please don't think that you are creating a safer situation by picking up and moving a potentially explosive device to a less populated area of your building or surroundings."

In that moment of goodwill, said Lt. Getting, you may have actually increased the destructive potential of the device, and chances are equally likely that the device will detonate during the movement.

Other topics covered during the two-day workshop include protecting the nation's food supply, legal considerations of quarantine and isolation, use of personal protective equipment, and psychological first aid.

The remaining 2005 Bioterrorism Symposia will be held May 24-25 in Kearney and June 16-17 in Gering. Continuing education units will be provided. To register, please go to <http://bioprep.org>.

UNMC Summer Health Professions Career Workshop

High school students entering their junior year are encouraged to apply to attend UNMC's Summer Health Professions Career Workshop Aug. 3-6.

Students interested in applying for the workshop can obtain an application from their school counselors. Eighteen students will be selected to participate in the workshop. Applications should be returned to the UNMC Youth Learning Center by June 1.

There is a \$250 registration fee and some scholarship money is available. For more information contact: Lisa Jewell, UNMC Youth Learning Center, (402) 559-6357 or e-mail her at ljewell@unmc.edu

Cultural Competency Workshop Provides Valuable Insight

Eighteen students from six undergraduate colleges across Nebraska spent the first week of January 2005 at UNMC in Omaha, learning about the growing diversity in Nebraska and the health professionals' role in providing culturally competent health care.

The workshop originated four years ago, after a student had expressed concerns that he did not have enough background to adequately treat people of different cultures.

The Cultural Competency Workshop provides great preparation for students who want to become health care professionals. The optimal goal of the workshop is to promote cultural competency beyond just theory and give students a chance to apply the concepts they learn through varied activities.

Most of the students who participated in the workshop are from rural communities.

Jody Elson, a third-year student at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, is from Curtis, a town of about 800. She enjoyed the standardized patient interviews and the opportunity to "shadow" health care providers at underserved clinics.

"The Cultural Competency Workshop was an amazing experience," said Elson, who plans to become a physician specializing in family medicine. "As a future health care provider, this workshop has helped me to become more aware of the challenges facing our society regarding ethnic diversity. I am grateful that the

Nebraska AHEC program office provided such a wonderful opportunity for me to begin my journey to becoming a more culturally aware individual and professional."

Meghan Piepho, a third-year student majoring in biochemistry pre-pharmacy at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, is from Ogallala, a town of about 5,000.

"Some of the things that I found to be beneficial were the different speakers who came in and told us how each different culture reacts and responds," said Piepho. "Specifically, I really enjoyed learning about the Asian Pacific Islanders. The speaker had so much to say and really helped me grasp a better understanding on their culture."

Some of the course activities that the students participated in included:

A panel discussion composed of members of different nationalities, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds.

Group research projects and presentations on clinical issues affecting underserved populations.

Standardized mock patient interviews to learn about verbal communication and body language.

Shadowing in underserved clinics to experience how cultural competency affects health professionals in a real life setting.

Each student also had to complete a 9-12 hour practicum, after the weeklong workshop, in a clinic that benefits an underserved community.



Quentin Stenger looks on and learns how health professionals take care of underserved patients during his practicum at the SONA clinic.

UNMC Ninth Annual Rural Health Professions Career Day set for Sept. 20

The Student Association for Rural Health (SARH) and the UNMC Rural Health Education Network (RHEN) invite high schools in rural communities to participate in the Ninth Annual Rural Health Professions Career Day.

This activity will provide counselors and students an opportunity to learn about health profession programs offered through UNMC.

Information will be given about the following departments: medicine, nursing, physician assistant, pharmacy, dentistry, dental hygiene, physical therapy, medical technology, radiation sciences, geriatrics and public health.

Space is limited. There will be a \$10 fee assessed for each student. For more information, please contact Liliana Bronner at (402) 559-8106 or email her at lbronner@unmc.edu.



Workshop participants included: Back Row (from left to right): Jody Elson, Amanda Goodenberger, Craig Pekny, Brandon Johnson, Brandon Fraley, Megan Poppe, Meghan Piepho, Quentin Stenger, Erin Schildt, Robin Crow. Front Row: Susan Newman, Cari Severinson, Amber Wiekamp, Jill Russell, Angela Wheeler, Danica Hamilton, Dana Stubbs, Layce Siemsen.

Chemical and Biological Casualties Course Part of the Center for Biopreparedness Outreach Efforts

For the past three years, the Center for Biopreparedness Education (CBE) has been on a quest to offer premier programs that relay information on biopreparedness.

News about the widespread biological and chemical weapons programs and worry about the use of these weapons by terrorists in the United States and other foreign countries, have heightened interest in our communities about the management of chemical and biological agent casualties.

To address this matter, the CBE brought military experts from the U.S. Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease (USMRIID) and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USAMRICD) to Omaha, Neb., for the second time on Jan. 22-23 to present a course in a community setting.

The Medical Management of Chemical and Biological Casualties (MCBC) course covered two days of

intensive classroom instruction and discussion on the characteristics of weapons of mass destruction, the emergency medical aspects of biological and chemical warfare agents, the pathophysiology, diagnosis, and treatment of biological and chemical injuries, as well as the aspects of preventing the spread of disease. The class was made up of mili-

tary and civilian medical personnel, physicians, nurses, public health workers, and many other front line staff that can be called to duty in the event of an attack. Attendees were composed of 132 Nebraskans from 35 cities across the state and 20 individuals from Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, and South Dakota.



Col. Jonathan Newmark from USMRIID talks to Michele Bever, public health risk coordinator at the South Heartland District Health Department, Richard Raymond, state director of regulation and licensure, and Sharon Medcalf, associate director of the CBE.

Students Gain New Opportunity to Experience Rural Life

By this summer, Robyn Henderson hopes to have at least 50 health profession students in community health rotations throughout rural Nebraska.

Through a contract with the federal National Health Service Corps (NHSC), students studying a health profession will get the opportunity to receive training in culturally diverse, community-based systems of care.

"The Student/Resident Experiences and Rotation in Community Health program, or SEARCH, will help provide students a perspective that is different from that of a strictly clinical role," said Henderson, who was recently appointed assistant director in the Rural Health Education Network Office.

The SEARCH program places special emphasis on interdisciplinary training and behavioral health careers. Rotations, which can last anywhere from two weeks to three months, are

targeted to culturally and economically diverse areas, with an emphasis on underserved populations and rural areas.

Henderson said students also will gain a better understanding of the role of health professionals as vital members of the community.

Students will be able to learn more about this role by participating in a required community project, such as assisting with AHEC career camps, presenting career awareness programs to youths or surveying community members on health concerns.

"This will allow the students to interact with people in the community outside of the clinical setting and expose them to rural life," Henderson said.

The culture of rural life is much different than urban life, she said.

Rural residents are less likely to see a doctor unless they are very sick and

less likely to have comprehensive health insurance or may just have a catastrophic policy that doesn't cover preventive care.

And when it comes to seeking help for mental health, rural people are less likely to do so, Henderson said.

"There is a definite pride in rural families and in that lifestyle that makes it harder for folks to share their concerns with their physician or seek another source of care," she said.

Reflecting program priorities and the needs of the community, Henderson said preference will be given to the following areas: dentistry, family practice, internal medicine, physician assistant, psychiatry, psychiatric nurse practitioner, psychology, pharmacy, social work and other behavioral health fields. To be eligible to participate students must be in their professional years of schooling.

Job Shadow Day Memorable Experience

Punxsutawney Phil wasn't the only one to see his shadow on Groundhog Day.

Healthcare providers in northern Nebraska also saw 145 job shadowers from 25 area schools.

Students shadowed healthcare providers in 38 different fields from administration to X-ray.

Now in its second year, the day was made successful with the cooperation of Faith Regional Health Services and 25 other health professional offices, facilities and clinics.

Students began the day listening to a variety of presentations by healthcare providers, including those from the UNMC's medical laboratory, physician assistant program and Life Net medical helicopter.

The high point for a few participants this year was a surprise invitation by Dr. Thomas Brandt, from Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk, to view a heart catheterization.

After lunch, the students were sent to 26 different sites for their job shadowing experience.



Cardiologist Thomas Brandt, M.D., demonstrates heart sounds for shadowing students.

Kaleb Cruise from St. Edward High School said his job shadowing experience was "very positive and very memorable."

"It was a great experience to see not only the job of the person I was shadowing, but also the other types of professions," said Mandi Miller from Hartington Cedar Catholic High School.

Plans are already being made for next year's program and the expansion of this program to the Fremont area.

NNAHEC Hires Marie Janke as New Office Manager

Marie Janke recently joined the Northern Nebraska AHEC staff as office manager.

Janke, her husband Bob and two teenage sons live in the country between Wayne and Winside.

Janke brings to NNAHEC a variety of experience of solid office skills, accounting, as well as teaching computer application classes.

After completing her first full week with NNAHEC, Janke said: "I can see that my computer skills will not become rusty!"



Marie Janke

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Three Hundred Students Attend Burwell Dental Carnival

Over 300 students from Garfield and Loup counties attended the Burwell (Neb.) Dental Carnival held on Friday, Feb. 4.

February was Children's Dental Health Month and kindergartners through sixth graders participated in this year's carnival.

Students rotated through six hands-on stations which included: Mr. Gross and Mr. Dip Lip, a station which taught students the harmful side effects of using smokeless

tobacco; Sugars Awareness, a visual display showing the amount of sugar in well-liked sport and soft drinks; Oral Hygiene, Musical Molars, Nutrition Bingo, Tooth I.D. and Eruption.

The Tooth Fairy handed out prizes to the students and all students received a free coloring book donated by the Northern Nebraska AHEC.

"I enjoyed assisting with the dental carnival," said Donovan Roy, program coordinator with Northern

Nebraska AHEC.

"The Burwell Dental Clinic and Loup Basin Health Department did a fantastic job educating students about oral hygiene," Roy said.

It's important that more health providers develop outreach programs such as Burwell's Dental Carnival, he said.

"Dr. Garner and his staff did a great job providing oral health to students in Garfield and Loup counties," Roy said.

Changes at NNAHEC

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She received her bachelor's degree in business administration from Wayne State College with a major in human resources management and a minor in management information systems.

Janke is currently working on her masters in business administration.

"In considering this position I thought it would offer a variety of responsibilities with no room for boredom," she said.

She was right.

Within her first week at work she assisted with an 8th grade science meet in Ainsworth, and a Groundhog Job Shadowing day in Norfolk.

"My original thought was not wrong...there is no room for boredom," Janke said.

"One enjoyable part of my new position," she said, "is the opportunity to be creative with projects that provide the organization with the greatest benefit, it's never a dull day!"



The mission of the Northern Nebraska Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is to promote, recruit and retain health care professionals through partnerships among health care, education and community providers in Northern Nebraska.

For further information please visit the NNAHEC Web site at: www.nnahec.org, or contact one of the following:

Gretchen Forsell MPH, RD
Executive Director
(402) 644-7256
gforsell@nnahec.org

Donovan Roy
Program Coordinator
(402) 644-7257
droy@nnahec.org

Marie Janke
Office Manager
(402) 644-7253
mjanke@nnahec.org

Address:
110 N. 16th St., Ste 2
Norfolk, NE 68701
Fax: (402) 644-7254

New Computer Workstations: Just What the Doctor Ordered

Northern Nebraska AHEC provided computer workstations for Oakland Hospital and Clinic in Oakland, and Avera St. Anthony Hospital in O'Neill.

Health profession students on rotations had limited access to computers and internet access, many times having to share limited facilities with preceptors and other practitioners.

These new workstations have helped both students and preceptors.

Rotations can be a time of intense learning in an unfamiliar setting.

Providing tools that students need is just one way Northern Nebraska AHEC can help.



Third-year medical student Abigail Ihrke takes advantage of the new computer workstation at Avera St. Anthony Hospital.

Ainsworth Science Meet Draws Large Crowd

The second annual eighth grade health science meet held in Ainsworth was bigger and better this year.

This year's Ainsworth meet tripled in student participation, with students from Cherry, Brown and Keya Paha county students.

Northern Nebraska AHEC partnered with the Ainsworth Chamber of Commerce, Ainsworth Schools and Brown County Hospital to conduct the science meet.

"Without the assistance of Linda O'Hara from the Ainsworth Chamber of Commerce and Betty Sheldon from Brown County Hospital, the science meet this year would have been difficult to do," said Gretchen Forsell, executive director for NNAHEC.

"Finding judges and coordinating the many parts of this meet is difficult when you are 145 miles away," she said. "Their assistance made this whole day flawless!"

While each of the regional science meets is different, Ainsworth adds a community component. The event is open to the public and also area schools.

"At any time at the Ainsworth meet you can find young and old alike viewing exhibits and the other activities for the students," said Donovan Roy, pro-

gram coordinator. "It is exciting to see a group of fourth graders come to view the exhibits and hear them say 'I am going to do this when I am in the eighth grade.'"

The Ainsworth meet also included a variety of hands-on experiences including first responder skills taught by Todd Thornton from the Ainsworth Rescue Squad.

Mary Begot introduced students to respiratory therapy and brought along calf lungs. Physical Therapist Audrey Cassel kept students dazzled by introducing several exercises that strengthen ligaments and flexibility.

Evan C. Evans, O.D., Ainsworth's local optometrist, talked about his profession and why he chose to practice in rural Nebraska.



All eyes are on EMT Todd Thornton as he demonstrates his skills to students.

More NNAHEC News

Over 1,200 youngsters from ages two to 13 spent a chilly February afternoon at the Sunset Plaza Mall in Norfolk learning about oral health.

Youth from Norfolk and nine surrounding counties attended the event.

The NNAHEC booth focused on dental health and NN-AHEC was lucky to have the Norfolk Junior Optimists Octagon International (JOOI) Club assist.

Six interactive stations were set up. They included: Mr. Gross Mouth; Stains (where the effects of different foods and liquids were shown on teeth); the proper way to brush and floss; and "My Favorite" (where youth were surveyed on their favorite flavor of toothpaste).

Providing six different activities for the students wouldn't have been possible without the help of the JOOI Club.

"These students gave up their Sunday to help Northern Nebraska AHEC with the stations," said Donovan Roy, program coordinator. "It is students like those in the JOOI Club that make my job rewarding."

NNAHEC continues to work with the JOOI Club and hopes to expand its involvement in other communities as other clubs develop in this region.

New Partnerships Form With State Grant

With funding from a new state grant program, professors from UNMC, Wayne State College and Northeast Community College hope to improve K-12 math and science education.

The Math & Science Partnership grant program is aimed at improving the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science in elementary and secondary school by enhancing the teaching skills of their instructors.

The UNMC RHEN office applied for the funding on behalf of Educational Service Unit #10. In January 2005, \$176,000 was awarded to ESU #10 and a consortium of 20 school districts in central and northern Nebraska.

A provision of the grant required a partnership be formed between a high-need school district, a teacher education department and an engineering, mathematics or science department of a college or university.

The consortium of school districts formed partnerships with Wayne State College and UNMC.

RHEN director Roxanna Jokela is the project director and Maurice Godfrey, Ph.D., associate professor of pediatrics

at UNMC, is director of science curriculum.

"This 18-month project will focus on working with science teachers in grades 9-12," said Jokela.

Part of the goal of this project is to provide these teachers with professional development to enhance their teaching styles.

This will be accomplished through workshops hosted by Wayne State College with support from UNMC and Northeast Community College.

"This grant will help the teachers obtain new strategies and teaching methods for teaching math and science at higher levels," said Barb Black, Ed.D., interim dean for the school of education and counseling at Wayne State College.

Twenty-two science teachers are expected to participate in a one-week workshop this summer at Wayne State. A two-week workshop is being planned for the summer of 2006, Dr. Black said. "The idea is that the teachers will take what we present to them back to their classrooms in the fall and present it to their students," Dr. Godfrey said.

RHEN/AHEC Community Grants Awarded

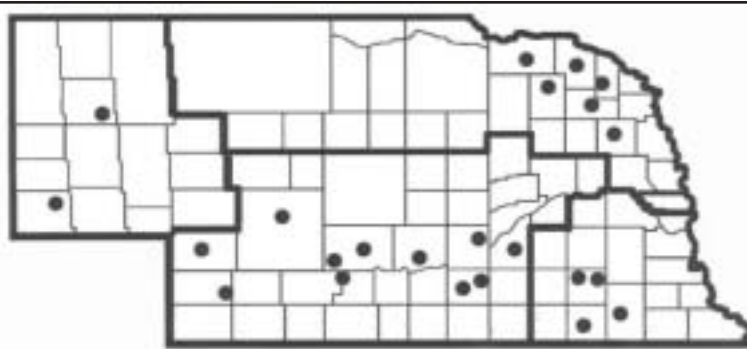
Twenty-seven small community grants were awarded through UNMC's Rural Health Education Network (RHEN) Office, the Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center (CN-AHEC), and the Northern Nebraska Area Health Education Center (NNAHEC).

The small community grant program was started in 1998 by Roxanna Jokela, director of RHEN.

"As I traveled across Nebraska, people kept telling me about their ideas to introduce local students to health care careers," Jokela said. "Over and over, I kept hearing that no one had any money available in their budgets to support these types of programs. We decided to make funds available so Nebraska communities could develop programs to benefit their local areas."

To be considered for funding, the applicant agency must partner with at least one additional organization/institution.

"For example, we encourage schools and local health care providers to develop programs together," Jokela said. "Everyone benefits when partnerships develop at the local level."



This map shows where the towns receiving community grants are located. Some towns received more than one grant.

The following towns received grants: Alliance, Aurora, Beatrice, Center, Concord, Crete, Eustis, Fairbury, Farnam, Friend, Grand Island, Grant, Hartington, Hastings, Kearney, Kimball, Lexington, North Platte, Osmond, Roseland, Wauneta, Wayne, and Wisner.

Grand Island Students Meet “Monsieur Bones”

Monsieur Bones made the rounds of five Grand Island elementary after-school programs.

With his beret and sunglasses removed, his mission was educating second- through fifth-grade students about the importance of the skeleton and the necessity of healthy bones.

Mr. Bones and his CN-AHEC assistants divided students into three teams for activities: “The Clever Clavicles,” “The Remarkable Ribs,” and “The Fabulous Femurs.”

An educational “big book” about bones detailed aspects regarding the skeleton, the make-up of bones, types of joints in the body, the need for bone marrow, and other helpful facts.

Students had the opportunity to create “factoid wraps,” consisting of pipe cleaners and beads that could be earned by answering questions about the skeleton and completing tasks

during the educational process of “Bones, Bones, Bones.”

Teams used crayons to trace around one of their teammates reclining on a large piece of paper in an action pose.

Each team then had three minutes to position a disarticulated Mr. Glow-in-the-Dark-Bones in the correct anatomical position within the tracing.

No CN-AHEC educational presentation is ever complete without some physical activity. The song “I Left My Bones in Louisiana” was a great motivator in getting participants to get their skeletons in motion. Everybody who could move, the paraprofessionals, the aides, and even the fifth-grade girl with her leg in a cast (fractured fibula, the smaller of the two bones located in the lower leg), all boogied together to bring this educational and fun get-together to a close.



“The Fabulous Femurs” of Lincoln Elementary School in Grand Island, demonstrate teamwork as they try to make Mr. Bones fit correctly within the outline of one of their classmates.

Human Skin Fascinates Students at Science Meet

Students participating in the UNMC CN-AHEC health science meet had the opportunity to learn about skin, scabs and wounds in one of the more interesting hands-on educational sessions.

These eighth-graders discovered that skin is the largest organ of the body, weighs about seven pounds and covers nearly 20 square feet and is amazing in all its functions.

Students were interested in discussing acne, dandruff and blisters, and seemed thrilled to discover that they were shedding approximately 40,000 dead skin cells every minute.

When group discussion turned to wounds, students learned the value of macrophages, blood platelets, blood

clotting and fibrin in the healing process.

The scholars decided that it was probably best not to pick at scabs, but to allow them to heal at nature’s pace.

Following the scientific presentation, students worked with a partner and created synthetic wounds and scabs (using petroleum jelly, red food coloring and cocoa, mixed with a piece of Kleenex) to “wear” on their hands and arms.

Hoping to elicit “sympathy votes” from the judges evaluating their poster entries, several of the students opted to wear their “wounds” throughout the day.

The fake wounds varied from tiny and insignificant to frightfully bloody and

huge. These area eighth graders appeared to enjoy an entirely different approach to learning about the alive and constantly changing protective wrapping we know as skin!



Jonathan Larson, Phelps County R-4 eighth-grader, laughs as he makes scabs during the health science meet.

2005 Summer Camps

Pre-Professional Workshop

May 10 (Hastings)

This one-day workshop offers high school juniors the opportunity to learn about allied health care careers in relation to caring, confidentiality, communication, culture and career-college planning. Contact: Jodi Sowl, Mary Lanning Hospital (402) 460-5710, jsowl@creighton/.edu.

Summer Health Occupations

Academy June 1-3 (Hastings)

This three-day event will provide students entering grades 8-12 a hands-on look at dental hygiene, dental assisting, health information management, medical assisting, medical laboratory technology, radiologic technology and nursing. Contact: Marie Cecil, Central Community College, (402) 461-2467, mcecil@cccneb.edu.

Exploring Health Career Camp

June 6-10 (Grand Island)

This 30-hour camp offers fun, hands-on opportunities to learn the skills and training for various medical careers for Grades 8-12. Contact: Doreen Foland, Wellness Works, (308) 398-5050, dfoland@kdsi.net.

Health Careers Academy

July 2005 (North Platte)

This 4-day summer camp for junior and senior high school students will provide an intensive introduction to health care professions using hands-on activities, job shadowing, and tours of different health care facilities. Contact: Sabrina Armour, Great Plains Regional Medical Center, (308) 534-9310, shepherds@mail.gprmc.com.

Creativity Flows at Science Meet

Have you ever pondered what effects dreaming has on your body?

Do adults dream differently than adolescents and children?

These are just a few examples of the science experiments that were conducted and presented at the Eighth Grade Health/Science Meet, held March 24 in Grand Island.

The science meet was sponsored by CN-AHEC and the UNMC Rural Health Education Network.

Thirty-eight students from six schools participated in the health/science meet.

Project categories included: chemistry, biochemistry and physics; earth, space and environmental science; medicine, health and microbiology; behavior and social science; botany and zoology; and computer, math and engineering.

The main objective of the science meet is to fully engage students in a detailed scientific project and to provide awareness of the many professional health careers available to them.

Students are required to complete a health/science project, write a short description or abstract, maintain a log-book and develop a poster board presentation.

Projects are judged on research documentation, applied scientific methods, oral presentation, visual display, creativity and originality.

At the regional Grand Island meet, top project winners were: Hope Scott, Arapahoe; Amber Himmelberg, Blue Hill; Keisha Franzen, Giltner; Lincoln Pearson, Elm Creek/ Phelps Co. R-4; Mark Lutkemeier, Silver Lake; and Haley Mondt, Funk.

Runner-up winners included: Amy Breing, Arapahoe; Andrew Bergman, Elm Creek/ Phelps Co. R-4; and Derek Marshall, Elm Creek/Phelps Co. R-4.

Camp Opens Eyes to Medical Technology

Saint Francis Medical Center, in partnership with the CN-AHEC, sponsored the second annual lab camp on March 19.

The six-hour day camp followed the theme "Laboratory Medicine: Scoping out the Answers."

Ten junior and senior high school students joined together at College Park in Grand Island to learn about the field of laboratory medicine.

The group was directed by Shelly Ballard, BS, MT (ASCP), and Christy Nickel, BA, MT (ASCP), both regional representatives for the ASCP.

Stefanie Balcom, a UNMC medical technology student from the Grand Island clinical site also helped to instruct the group.

The group worked through six different cases throughout the day, performing testing in conjunction with patient information.

Some of the tests performed were arterial blood gases, RSV testing and ABO grouping.

The students were quick to see the importance of laboratory testing to

patient care.

Many of the students indicated an interest in the health care field and of the 10 attending, three were considering medical technology as a profession choice.

Much of the central Nebraska area was represented with students coming from as far as St. Paul, North Loup-Scotia and Farwell. At the end of the day it was a great learning experience for both the students and instructors.



Junior and senior high school students learned about the importance of laboratory testing at the "CSI Lab Camp."

Student Projects Highlight of Meet



Jamie Easterday, an 8th grader from Eustis/Farnam Middle School displays her Health/Science project titled: “Stop The Snap, Crackle & Pop.” Jamie explained to the judges her theory on noise effecting students while taking tests. Jamie’s scientific test results for this experiment did indeed indicate unwanted noise did effect the students’ test results.

One hundred and eighteen students participated in the Western Regional Health/Science Meet on March 29 in North Platte.

Different from other health/science meets held throughout the state, the Western Regional Health/Science Meet is designed for students in grades 7 – 12.

The meet is a partnership between the Nebraska Junior Academy of Sciences, CN-AHEC and the UNMC Rural Health Education Network.

North Platte Community College sponsored and hosted the meet and Great Plains Regional Medical Center partnered in arranging the breakout sessions held throughout the meet.

Students participating in the meet must follow the Nebraska Junior

Academy of Sciences guidelines and enter a display board on their experimental project at the meet.

High schools students must do projects individually, but junior high and middle school students can do one individually or with a partner.

Eighth-grade students compete and receive awards in both the eighth grade health/science meet and the Nebraska Junior Academy of Science meet.

Schools that participated in this year’s meet included: McCook Saint Patrick, Imperial Grade School, Brady Public Schools, Eustis-Farnam Middle School, Grant Middle School, North Platte Saint Patrick’s and South Platte Public School in Big Springs.

Top project winners were: Krista Albers, North Platte Saint Patrick;

Jordan Mahnken, Grant; Hilary Messersmith, Eustis/Farnam; Amy Been, McCook Saint Patrick; and Olivia Walter, McCook Saint Patrick.

Students from the Western Regional Health/Science Meet with the top healthscience projects will be invited to attend a state meet at UNMC in Omaha in June.

Top health/science project winners from the Nebraska Junior Academy of Science category also will be invited to a state meet, sponsored by Nebraska Wesleyan University in April.



Emily Slattery, an 8th grader from McCook St. Patrick’s completed her Health/Science project by looking at pictures of feet from both men and women. Emily’s project entitled Left Foot, Right Foot, Girl Foot, Boy Foot concluded that people cannot tell the gender of another person by looking at a picture of that person’s feet.

The Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center’s mission is to enhance access to quality health care in Central Nebraska, particularly primary and preventive care.

CN-AHEC offices are located at College Park, 3180 West Highway 34, Grand Island, 68801-7279. With questions, please visit the CN-AHEC Web site at www.cn-ahec.org, or contact one of the following:

Executive Director
Sarah Cunningham, Ph.D.
phone: (308) 385-5074
e-mail: sarah@cn-ahec.org



Business Coordinator: Mary Roy
phone: (308) 385-6677;
e-mail: mary@cn-ahec.org

Health Sciences Consultant
Sally K. Husen
phone: (308) 385-6429
e-mail: sally@cn-ahec.org

Education, Outreach Coordinator
Cindy Paustian
phone: (308) 385-6426
e-mail: cindy@cn-ahec.org

Hablamos Juntos
phone: (308) 385-6428

Project Director: Mercedes Ayala
e-mail: mercedes@cn-ahec.org

Project Assistant: Rosa Guia
e-mail: rosa@cn-ahec.org



Panhandle AHEC Hosts First Health Science Meet

The UNMC College of Nursing/NP-AHEC co-sponsored the Panhandle Regional Science Meet March 16 at the University of Nebraska Panhandle Station in Scottsbluff.

Forty-four students presented projects that varied from feeding creatine-supplemented fish food to gold fish, to identifying which type of popcorn resulted in the least amount of unpopped kernels when popped.

As well as presenting their own projects, students have the opportunity to learn about other areas of science.

Susan Wilhelm, Ph.D., associate professor of health for the UNMC College of Nursing, presented a special program titled "Baby's Development."

Dr. John Thomas gave the students a treat by allowing them to handle Madagascar hissing cockroaches and presented a lesson about insects.

Dr. Thomas talked to the students about what insects are, why they are studied and the goods that some produce (wax, honey, dyes, silk, etc.). The students were very attentive and interactive.

Dr. Marie Kreman enjoyed visiting and judging Michael Livingstone's project, "You're in the Bubble."



Michael Livingstone, from Potter-Dix School, tells Dr. Marie Kreman about his project, "You're in my Bubble," in which he compared gold fish fed creatine and tetramin with those fed tetramin only.

Livingstone is a student from Potter-Dix Public Schools.

Michael studied the effects of creatine, a supplement used by many weightlifters, on gold fish.

After all of the fish given creatine died, Livingstone concluded that anyone using a supplement, especially creatine, should consult with a doctor before use.

"Who carries more weight in their back packs, girls or boys?" was the question James Safarik, of Hyannis, pondered.

Safarik's hypothesis was that boys carried more.

But his experiment showed that girls carried more.

During the 28-day experiment Safarik weighed students' backpacks as they entered school. Boys' backpacks averaged eight pounds and the girls averaged 12 pounds per pack.

Safarik's data included research on the skeletal impact of heavy backpacks.

He suggested further study relating to exercise and excessive weight as additional factors that effect our well being.

New Health Professions Club Introduces Students to Health Careers

A new Health Professions Club has been started in Alliance through the partnership of Box Butte General Hospital, Alliance High School science teachers, and a \$3,000 grant from the Rural Health Education Network (RHEN).

The idea for a Health Professions Club is to reach more students from broader ethnic, educational and eco-

nomic backgrounds and introduce them to careers in health care.

In this program high school and college students are given the opportunity to rotate through every department of the hospital shadowing various health professionals, in addition to part-time employment during the summer.

The summer intern program has been successful in sparking interest in health

care education.

In the early fall of 2004, Pam McDonald, Lynn Placek, and Jane McConkey from the hospital met with high school science teachers Pam Schnell, Laura Schroer, Vicky Joule and counselor Bill Reno to discuss plans to start the club.

The hospital agreed to sponsor the

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Exciting Times for New Panhandle AHEC

The new Nebraska Panhandle AHEC has been developing like any newborn.

The organizational items are taking shape, from the non-profit status application to the ordering of tools, to the hiring of personnel.

Our new office manager is Cassandra Whipple. Cassandra will be a tremendous asset to the AHEC due to her recent experience in a local law firm and bilingual ability.

We also welcome our education coordinator, Joy Mockelmann-Baker, Ph.D. Dr. Mockelmann-Baker has been involved with schools and health care over the past 15 years as both an educator (superintendent, director of curriculum and teacher) and a private day-care provider in Colorado and Nebraska.

We have been busy finalizing our logo, letterhead and Web site. You can find us at np-ahec.org.

Of course, activities recently have evolved around the Student/Resident Experiences and Rotation in Community Health program, visits with area counselors and other school personnel, meetings with prospective preceptors and attending the many meet-

William Zitterkopf

Executive Director,
Nebraska
Panhandle AHEC



ings that all executive directors attend to keep abreast of the health profession changes continually going on around our wonderful state.

Being recently appointed to the education subcommittee of the Tele-health Network is an example of the outstanding statewide efforts being made to create collaboration and overall connectivity of our health needs and solutions.

I am proud to announce the members of our new AHEC board.

They include: Janice Fitts, Panhandle Community Services, board president; Jane McConkey, Box Butte General Hospital, vice president; Dan Doherty, Western Nebraska Community College, treasurer; Joyce Hardy, CSC, secretary; Kim Engel, Panhandle Public Health Department; Gloria Gross, UNMC

College of Nursing; Milton Johnson, M.D., Horizons West Medical; Roxanna Jokela, RHEN director and deputy director Nebraska AHEC; Shelly McCoy, Western Family Medicine; Pam O'Neal, Western Nebraska Community College; Julie Pengelly, Scottsbluff High School; Laura Richards, Region I Medical Health and Substance Abuse; Linda Schneider, Highland Park Care Center; Linda Schoemaker, Memorial Health Center; Sen. Adrian Smith, Legislative District 48; and Teresa Ross, Regional West Medical Center.

Community grant RFPs have been a priority for the purpose of getting the new AHEC off the ground and developing partnerships with some of the 14 county panhandle agencies.

Job shadowing, health fairs, career fairs, working with residents and rotating students are part of the immediate goals. If you have any suggestions or ideas, feel free to email me or call. Your comments and suggestions will be appreciated.

Finally, thanks to everyone for helping get our AHEC off to a fantastic start!

New Health Professions Club in Alliance

Continued from page 12
club and applied for a RHEN community partnership grant with support from the high school.

At an organizational meeting on Nov. 24, officers were elected, the purpose of the club was explained and shadowing opportunities.

More than 40 students attended, along with three teachers and six hospital employees.

The club has sponsored many informative activities since forming. These included: a presentation from Marina Girard on careers in medical technology and certified medical interpretation; a Power Point demonstration on cardio-

vascular technology by Nathan Walker, a student at BryanLGH College of Health Sciences; and a look at a day in the life of a doctor with David Isom, M.D., and Joshua McConkey, M.D.

Drs. Isom and McConkey are RHOP graduates of Chadron State College and the UNMC College of Medicine.

At the March meeting the club had a panel discussion with five nurses about different nursing roles and educational tracks. On March 25 16 students went to Scottsbluff for a tour of the UNMC College of Nursing West Division campus and the radiology program through Western Nebraska Community College and Regional West Medical Center.



Executive Director

William Zitterkopf
phone: (308) 635-6713
e-mail: doczitter@np-ahec.org

Education Coordinator

Joy Mockelmann-Baker, Ph.D.
phone: (308) 635-6712
e-mail: drjoy@np-ahec.org

Office Manager

Cassandra Whipple
phone: (308) 635-6711
e-mail: whipplec@np-ahec.org

The World-Herald Names UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer “Midlander of the Year”

For being “the spark behind what may be the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s most explosive period of growth and for his efforts to make UNMC a world-class academic medical center,” UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., was named “Midlander of the Year” for 2004 by The Omaha World-Herald.

In a special 12-page section in the Jan. 2 edition, the newspaper highlighted Dr. Maurer’s accomplishments and featured five key faculty members who have been recruited or retained by the medical center during Dr. Maurer’s tenure.

In addition, the section: highlighted milestones in UNMC’s 125-year history; detailed the five construction projects currently under way or expected to begin within the next year; listed eight major construction projects that have been completed since Dr. Maurer arrived at UNMC in 1993; featured Dr. Maurer’s future goals for UNMC; and recognized Dr. Maurer’s wife, Beverly, for being “the chancellor’s sounding board and wife of 44 years.”

“I’m honored and humbled to be recognized with my family for this award,” Dr. Maurer said. “It really represents the outstanding achievements of all the faculty and staff at the medical center. They deserve all the credit. As the



Beverly and Harold M. Maurer, M.D.

award notes, this goes to a ‘Midlander,’ and I’m very proud to have lived in Nebraska these past 12 years. The people of the state – from Omaha to the Panhandle – have been very good to me and they all contribute to the success of the Medical Center.”

Dr. Maurer becomes the 40th recipient of the Midlander of the Year Award, which was initiated in 1965 by the World-Herald to recognize business, political, educational and community leaders who have made a difference in Nebraska and the region.

He is the first person from UNMC to ever receive the award. Other prominent recipients have included: Tom and Nancy Osborne, Bob Kerrey and J. James Exon.

“We try to choose someone who has

had a significant impact on the Midlands and done a great job,” said Larry King, executive editor of the newspaper. “We’ve been looking at the medical center for quite awhile. It rose to the top with the recent announcement of the second research tower. It seemed like the right time to recognize the chancellor for all that’s happening. The momentum (at UNMC) is so big. It’s hard to ignore.”

James B. Milliken, J.D., president of the University of Nebraska, saluted Dr. Maurer for the honor.

“Dr. Maurer has been exceptionally effective as chancellor of UNMC,” Milliken said. “He has placed a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary team research efforts, which has paid off in dramatic increases in competitive research funding. He also has taken on serious issues such as rural health care and the shortage of nurses with considerable success.”

Perhaps John Niemann, Ed.D., senior vice president of the University of Nebraska Foundation, summed Dr. Maurer up best when he said: “A lot of people are good thinkers, but Hal’s kind of the whole package - a thinker and a person who’s got the energy, strength, character and courage to carry through on their plan.”

Geriatric Fellowships Aimed at Practicing Health Care Professionals

The care needed by the geriatric patient is complex.

It doesn’t just involve treatment of the disease but also an understanding of how a person’s ability to function affects their quality of life.

That is why it is so important for health care professionals, especially providers in rural communities, to seek the most up-to-date information on caring for geriatric patients, said Jane Potter, M.D., and Neumann & Mildred Harris Geriatrics Professor at UNMC.

“Clearly there has been very little training specific to geriatrics for most

of the professionals practicing today,” Dr. Potter said.

In an effort to change that, the Nebraska Geriatric Education Center at UNMC is offering a “Mini-Fellowship in Geriatrics” to health care professionals starting in July.

The geriatric mini-fellowship program, under the direction of Dr. Potter and Ed Vandenberg, M.D., is funded through a five-year grant from the Bureau of Health Professions, a division of the Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

There are three components to the program: interdisciplinary, discipline specific, and an optional faculty development component for faculty preceptors.

The target audience includes physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, physical therapists and nurse practitioners.

Dr. Potter said she hopes the training will help health care professionals recognize and treat things like weight loss, gait disorders and incontinence that affect the patient’s overall quality

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Mini-Fellowships in Geriatrics will Expand Training

Continued from page 14
of life.

“Functional issues may exceed the importance of treating any specific disease or disorder,” said Dr. Potter. “One of the basic aspects of the training will include what we call geriatric syndromes.”

Part of the training is to help health care providers become better equipped to know when to call on their colleagues in other facets of health care for help.

“While these syndromes have some basis in underlying disease, in many instances the approach to improving the patient’s quality of life will require medical providers to work with other disciplines,” Dr. Potter said.

For example, if a patient is experiencing dizziness or incontinence, their primary health care provider may need to seek the services of a pharmacist or therapist to fully address these issues, she said. In other cases, a pharmacist or therapist may detect a problem that should be called to the attention of the primary provider.

Already interest in the mini-fellowships is growing, Dr. Potter said.

So far, there are more than 200 professionals across the state, who have responded to brochures that were sent out earlier this year and have voiced interest in the training.

The mini-fellowship offers a comprehensive series of coursework. These

courses are completed through a combination of web-based modules and by attending conferences.

A large conference, the “Advances in Geriatric Care Conference,” will be held July 29-30 in Omaha as a start-up for the fellowship, she said, with other conferences following at various locations across the state.

“We hope that most people will be able to complete their training in 12 months,” Dr. Potter said, “but they may also opt to spread it out over 18-24 months.”

For more information about the geriatric mini-fellowship program call Kate Oelke Turner at (402) 559-3964 or e-mail her at kfturner@unmc.edu

RHEN Office Welcomes Two New Employees

Lisa Madsen joined the RHEN office on Nov. 1, 2004.

Job: As staff assistant, I assist with projects in the department, help prepare materials for project coordinators, maintain the director’s calendar and help with special events planning. I also maintain the databases for RHEN, the FOCUS newsletter and the various committees.



Lisa Madsen

Childhood: My parents, whom I admire greatly, were in the education field. My father was a college professor and my mom taught elementary school, and although I was born in San Diego, we moved often. I’ve lived in Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska, where my parents finally settled. I graduated from Blair Senior High School and earned my elementary education degree from Dana College in Blair.

Family: I met my husband Paul at Dana College. We have three children - Laura, 16, Dane, 12, and Jake, 5.

Hobbies: I love photography and

scrapbooking, reading and watching movies.

Robyn Henderson joined the RHEN office on Feb. 14, 2005

Job: Assistant RHEN director. My primary activity is developing and implementing the SEARCH program, (Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health). I also serve as a resource for the AHEC directors and staff and will help plan the National AHEC Organization annual conference that will be hosted by us in Omaha in 2006.

Childhood: I grew up in Scottsbluff. My family moved to North Platte during my final two years of high school, so I graduated from North Platte Senior High School. Ironically, Lisa Madsen and I discovered that we both attended North Platte Senior High during our junior year and were in band together! I have a double major in history and political science from Nebraska Wesleyan University.



Robyn Henderson

During college I began working as a legislative aide to Richard Marvel, Ph.D., a state senator from Hastings. That solidified my interest in politics. Between 1982 and 1998, I shuffled back and forth between Nebraska and Washington, D.C., first working on the senatorial campaign for Jim Exon and then as his legislative assistant for health and education.

After I left his office, I spent several years working as a lobbyist and policy analyst for several agencies in Washington, D.C. focusing on rural and health issues.

Between 1998 and 2005, I focused my passion on rural health, first working for the National Rural Health Association in Kansas City, Mo., and then at the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center in Lincoln.

Family: I have two cats that are my children with fur. My parents live in York, and I have one sister who is married with two children living in Lincoln.

Hobbies: I love to read about medieval history and fictional medieval mysteries. I like gardening and listening to all kinds of music, especially jazz and classical music.

LEAD Nebraska Delegation Visits UNMC

On Saturday, Feb. 26, participants of the 23rd class of the Nebraska LEAD program spent a morning at the UNMC Durham Research Center, hearing from various campus leaders and touring select facilities.

David Crouse, Ph.D., associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and associate dean for graduate studies at UNMC, gave the LEAD participants an overview of UNMC.

Other presenters and their topics included:

Margaret (Peggy) Wheelock, Ph.D., professor of oral biology, on the Nebraska Center for Cellular Signaling.

Kenneth Cowan, M.D., Ph.D., director, UNMC Eppley Cancer Center, on the Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer and Allied Diseases.

Alexander (Sasha) Kabanov, Ph.D., Dr.Sc., director, Center for Drug



Members of the Nebraska LEAD program.

Delivery and Nanomedicine, on Nanotechnology for Treating Cancer.

Susanna Von Essen, M.D., professor of pulmonary and critical care medicine, on the effects of hog confinements and feedlots on community health.

Liliana Bronner, MHSA, program coordinator of the Rural Health Education Network, on the various activities of the RHEN program,

including the Area Health Education Centers and the Rural Health Opportunities Program.

The visit concluded with a tour of The Lied Transplant Center (LTC) given by David Eggers, who related his personal story as a transplant recipient and brought first-hand knowledge of the positive outcomes that the LTC has achieved for patients around the world.

“One of the biggest challenges facing our society today is that of health care,” said Allen Blezek, Ph.D., director the Nebraska LEAD program.

“For the past 20 years, we have been honored to be able to work with some of the finest health care professionals in better understanding current innovations in health care as well as learn more about the University of Nebraska Medical Center, a tremendous state resource.”

Visit our new Web site at www.unmc.edu/RHEN

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