

August 1, 2016
Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

Rural Futures Serviceship program

Two students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln just completed a learning experience of a lifetime as they were “community Serviceship” interns immersed in a summer experience at Curtis.

We enjoyed hosting Jamie Mashino of Spencer and Courtney Ruda of North Platte at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture campus where they lived in one of our residence halls for two months, and also helped research and draft our first official campus recycling proposal.

I extend a hat tip to the Rural Futures Institute, one of our colleagues in the University of Nebraska system, for developing the community serviceship program in Nebraska’s rural communities and guiding UNL students through this positive leadership opportunity.

When we asked the City of Curtis if they were interested in exploring this unique program, city and economic development leaders immediately stepped forward and said, “We’re in!”

Our two-fold process started back in January when the three-way partnership decided to make application to the RFI Community Stewardship program through the Heartland Center for Leadership. Multiple partners at the University of Nebraska solidly support this statewide project.

Here in Frontier County, the City of Curtis served as the applicant with NCTA supplying housing and faculty expertise, and Medicine Valley Economic Development Corporation providing financial assistance for the intern stipends.

Curtis City Administrator Doug Schultz coordinated much of the city and economic development project guidance. Tee Bush, NCTA assistant professor of math who also teaches horticulture and leadership, guided Jamie and Courtney through the recycling research and defined Phase I of a campus wide recycling plan and grant application to the Nebraska State Recycling Association.

If successfully funded through the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the NSRA grant will enable NCTA to purchase recycling containers to be placed across campus and in student housing. Recyclables such as paper, newspapers, plastic bottles and aluminum cans will be collected and transported with the City of Curtis recyclable items to a Lexington recycling center.

I envision other grant applications by NCTA to assist with funding the new project, as the City expands its efforts, too, to add a compactor for cardboard and eventually build an enclosed collection and warehousing facility to lessen the transportation trips to the Lexington recycling center.

While the recycling project was the primary effort at NCTA, the two interns contributed much effort to a community needs survey with Curtis residents, as well making application to the State of Nebraska for designation as a Leadership Community.

Thank you, Jamie, Courtney and the RFI Serviceship program for this leadership-building program. We appreciate all you have pledged to the City of Curtis and our campus programs at NCTA.

Upcoming Events:

- Aug. 3 – Appreciation Lunch at the NCTA Deli, Student Union
- Aug. 5 – End of NCTA summer session
- Aug. 10 – NCTA Agronomy Youth Field Day, 9 a.m., Ed Center
- Aug. 11 – State Advisory Meeting, 10 a.m., Ed Center
- Aug. 19-22 – NCTA New Student Orientation
- Aug. 22-26 – First week of fall classes

NCTA Mission:

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.