

June 27, 2016

Building rural leaders at NCTA

by NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, PhD

Our campus is fortunate to be called “home” this summer for two college students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as they experience a rural community “servicship” program in Curtis.

A partnership with the City of Curtis and the University’s Rural Futures Institute (RFI) established the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture as host for the RFI interns at one of our residence halls.

Courtney Ruda of rural North Platte and Jamie Mashino of Spencer are working with NCTA and the City of Curtis on local projects. Our in-kind contribution of nine weeks housing is one component of the partnership.

The other is staff guidance by Tee Bush, NCTA math and horticulture faculty member, as Courtney and Jamie research and plan NCTA’s first campus recycling program.

“RFI interns are helping us in research and dedicating time to finding funding sources for recycling programs,” says Tee Bush. “It’s slow steps here at first, but we plan to have a grant application prepared by the interns before they leave the community at the end of July.”

The pair launched their research for locations of indoor and outdoor recycling containers across the campus, and pickup and disposal methods. Phase I will incorporate recycling for paper, #1 plastic and aluminum cans. NCTA students will be responsible for collecting the containers for further handling by the City.

In future grant applications, NCTA hopes to include cardboard and other materials such as kitchen waste.

City programs and some recycling at the high school are part of the overall project, says Doug Schulz, city administrator. An ideal recycling program would allow indoor storage at a city location for the recyclables in separate containers, plus a baler for packing the cardboard, he adds.

The project includes providing educational opportunities aimed at increasing public awareness of what is recyclable and how residents of a rural community can assist in reducing materials in the waste stream.

Jamie and Courtney are taking charge in some of their early leadership roles at NCTA. They recently helped with a Nature Camp hosted by Frontier County Extension and NCTA Horticulture. They developed a session for 4-H youngsters to learn about recycling and how to read symbols on materials.

An afternoon session included some games including a recycling relay. Youth had fun bowling with pop bottles, playing with a ring toss of cardboard and alumni cans, and developing ideas for reusing milk jugs.

NCTA is a place for educating the public and emphasizing conservation principles. We support the Curtis RFI interns in gaining leadership skills from all phases of the community, and appreciate their work here at NCTA.

“The RFI Community Serviceship program is beneficial to all parties, at minimal cost,” Schultz says. “It’s a good thing for Curtis to be involved with and I hope we can do it again next year.”

Organizations seeking additional information about the project should contact the City of Curtis or call Tee Bush here at NCTA at 367-5226.

Campus Events:

June 30 – 4-H Presentations Contest, 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., NCTA Livestock Teaching Center

July 4 – NCTA Campus closed

July 10-16 – Tri State Delta Conference, Teacher Professional Development week

July 11 – New Student Registration, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Education Center

July 16 – Frontier County 4-H Horse Show, Stockville (NCTA Arena in case of rain)

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.

#

Media inquiries to:

Mary Crawford, NCTA News, 308-367-5231, Mcrawford@unl.edu

Dean’s.Column.06.27.16