Linking with Curtis partners  
By NCTA Dean Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

Let’s celebrate the Earth this week, Arbor Day in Nebraska, and our role in responsible stewardship of natural resources.

Appropriately, the campus of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is ideally suited to the vocation of agricultural production and conservation.

The community of Curtis shares appreciation of our beautiful NCTA campus, which now is greening up, thanks to some timely rains and, yes, even light snow.

We hope our shrubs, flowers and lawns continue their awakening as for the first time in many years, the NCTA Graduation returns outside at Ag Hall. You are invited to join us on May 6.

This Thursday, NCTA Aggie students have signed up through some of their classes or student clubs to pitch in for the Curtis Community Cleanup. It was postponed from a chilly Earth Day cleanup on April 22 to April 29. We expect nearly 40 students from NCTA.

Karmen Herrick, vice president of the Medicine Valley Chamber of Commerce, is organizing the cleanup from 5-p.m. Volunteers will gather at the Curtis City Park for assignments in picking up litter, cleaning and sweeping sidewalks in the business district, and sprucing up flower beds or shrubbery around town.

“My mother and I walk a lot in the community and notice the trash which accumulates,” Karmen said. Winter winds force litter against fences and along high-use public areas.

Youth and NCTA students enjoy community service and are great helpers, she said. Younger 4-H members of the Happy Helpers will be working around the grade school, city park and the swimming pool. Local Girl Scouts will be serving a meal with a free-will donation.

NCTA honor students from Phi Theta Kappa, Aggies students in the accounting and macroeconomics classes taught by Mary Rittenhouse, and the NCTA Stock Dog Team members will join the effort. Herrick said she appreciates college-age students who can be safe and watchful in litter cleanup along the highway through town.

“We couldn’t get these types of projects done without the college and our businesses,” she adds. Several merchants and banks provide bottled water, gloves, brooms, rakes, garbage bags, and more.
Community partners

I’ve appreciated the Chamber of Commerce and the support they give all year to NCTA. The group already is planning the picnic and Welcome Packets for NCTA students for their August 29 arrival.

Chamber President Whitney Brown, who also is a Vet Tech alumna of NCTA, says Curtis Fall Festival always has great involvement by NCTA (even during the pandemic last September). From preparing entries in the parade, to setting up City Park for children’s games, and organizing cleanup around town, the Aggie students earn community service credits at the college. They work long hours and great fun getting to know the community early in their college career.

“All of this in the name of volunteer work, in a town they did not grow up in. The Fall Festival truly could not and would not exist without the enormous amount of volunteer time and efforts involved,” Whitney says. “We are very grateful for the behind-the-scenes work NCTA and their students provide. This symbiotic relationship is truly capstone in reflecting NCTA’s partnership with, and commitment to, the community.”

Another Vet Tech alumnus and active Chamber of Commerce leader is Misty Lenz. “It means a lot for us to have the students involved. My involvement has always been for Fall Festival for many years to get the volunteers.”

Last weekend, NCTA students from veterinary technology and crops judging team helped Sheila and Kevin Brown, organizers of the all-volunteer Star Theatre, work at outside spruce up. For the Saturday-Sunday movies volunteers sell tickets and usher, sell concessions, and clean. It’s one more way Aggie students engage and interact with community residents, at their “home-away-from-home” in Curtis.

Have a great Arbor Day on Friday. Get out outside, plant a tree, and enjoy fresh air!

**May Intercession:** We are offering a new “intercession” program for three weeks in May. In-person coursework May 10-28 will be in Livestock Breeding with Professor Doug Smith or Accounting I with Professor Mary Rittenhouse. Housing and campus meal plans are available. For details, contact doug.smith@unl.edu or mrittenhouse2@unl.edu. New or current students should contact Gaylene Stinman at gstinman2@unl.edu or call 308-367-5267.

**NCTA Events:**
April 29: Curtis Community Clean Up, 5-7 p.m., Meet at Curtis City Park
April 30: Arbor Day 2021. Plant a tree!
May 6: NCTA Graduation, 1:30 p.m., Football field south of Ag Hall
June 26: Aggie Alumni Day, 10 a.m., Registration, 11:30 a.m. Luncheon, program

*Part of the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is a two-year institution with a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology and related industries. NCTA is known for its affordable tuition, high job-placement rate for its graduates, and for the success of student teams in competitive activities including crops judging, ranch horse events, livestock judging, shotgun sports, stock dog trials, and intercollegiate rodeo. The college is consistently ranked as one of the best two-year schools in the nation.*

*Online article: [https://go.unl.edu/nzjx](https://go.unl.edu/nzjx)*

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