



## NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

July 20, 2022

### **A summer checklist from campus**

Dean's Report by NCTA Dean Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

What does an ag producer do when he/she knows triple digits or high winds are forecast?

Load the fencing pickup or the ATV sprayer before dawn and get 7 or 8 hours of work done by noon. Grind hay and spray weeds in the early-morning calm.

When it rains (a rarity in much of Nebraska this summer, unfortunately), clean the tools and shop, perform machinery maintenance, attend to bookkeeping.

Summer staff at the Nebraska College of Agriculture is plenty busy. Irrigating and managing crops at the college farm. Moving cattle to grass, maintaining water, fixing fence, facility upgrades.

Campus maintenance projects started May 6, a day post-graduation. Deep cleaning and painting started in residence halls and classrooms, between and during youth camps and conferences. Then, the 8-week summer session started June 13 and ends August 5.

The NCTA staff and supervisors are, indeed, juggling the many tasks, resources and schedules for ongoing events and classes. It is gratifying to measure the progress of a three-phase master plan of NCTA's workload:

- Deferred maintenance completed (for major projects, only)
- Deferred maintenance currently underway (or out for bid in near-term)
- Deferred maintenance for largest projects (LB 384 funds, \$3 million to NCTA)

I've shared some of the earliest projects done over winter and spring. We made great headway. Completed in Phase 1:

- ✓ Underground steam tunnel replaced
- ✓ New windows in Traditional West Residence Hall
- ✓ Maintenance Department moved from Ag Mechanics to Farm Shop east side of campus
- ✓ Clean, paint floors and walls in former Maintenance Shop for expanded Welding Lab
- ✓ Landscaping upgrades with new sod, improved drainage at Ag Mechanics
- ✓ Install new sidewalk, upgrade drainage north of The Barn (student activity center)
- ✓ Dean's Residence upgrade – new garage, paint, roof, gutters, windows, landscaping
- ✓ Frontier County Extension office remodel – new HVAC, flooring, wall repairs
- ✓ New roofs on all residence halls and the greenhouse
- ✓ Build livestock loading chute for semi-tractor / trailer access
- ✓ Rebuild pen for small ruminants
- ✓ Paint, replace flooring in Residence Life apartment at Wet Traditional

## **Landscaping and campus beautification**

We see progress in upgrades for enhanced accessibility, safety, and aesthetics.

With an adult daughter who has expertise in landscaping, I may have a bias, admittedly, for improvements at campus. Upon my arrival to Curtis in June 2020, we proposed a few.

Ambur designed the landscape layout for flower beds, entrance upgrades with plantings, and where we could incorporate projects by Horticulture Club students and volunteers.

We assessed trees, shrubs, and turf. Some areas with rotting cement, bricks or decay went on the list for repair or removal.

Campus beautification can be as simple as picking up litter, raking debris, pulling weeds around buildings, adding window boxes and flowers, or painting a tired-looking handrail.

Aggie students expect and deserve welcoming surroundings where they live, learn, and work. Pleasing aesthetics improves NCTA for our guests and the community.

In late June, we hired Curtis resident and former student worker Tzi Martinez to coordinate this master plan as our temporary Grounds Supervisor. Tzi is gung-ho to learn all facets of his new role. We welcome his work ethic, skills, and enthusiasm.

Kudos to our dedicated staff and faculty. From the livestock facilities and feedlot to new plantings around buildings, and a new access ramp at Aggie West Residence Hall, we've made steady strides the past 2 ½ months. Watch for updates on Phases 2 and 3.

I invite you to see our progress. Drive around campus. Exercise on the trails and walkways. Enjoy our part of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. I am excited to see what NCTA campus looks like in mid-August.

Meanwhile, join us at the farm July 26 for a Field Day about Cover Crops and Conservation. Athletes, remember to join Coach Del Van Der Werff for the basketball reunion on July 30. Take in a local county fair to see agriculture in action!

### **NCTA Events:**

July 26: Cover Crops & Conservation Field Day, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., NCTA Ed Center and Farm

July 30: Aggie Basketball Team Reunion, 12-5 p.m., Curtis Community Center

July 23-31: Frontier County Fair, Stockville

August 3-6: Eustis Fair and Corn Show, Eustis

August 5: NCTA Summer Session ends

*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.*



Volunteers and Aggie Horticulture Club members at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture cleaned up flower beds outside of Ag Hall before adding new plantings. From left, Abbie Feldt, Ambur Gossen, landscape advisor; Dan Stehlik, NCTA faculty and Horticulture Club co-sponsor; Shelby Kofler, Rene' Assels and Elie Madsen. Students are from Kemp, Texas; McCook, North Platte and Maxwell, Nebraska. (Larry Gossen / NCTA photo)



Horticulture Club Aggies and their landscaping consultant grabbed shovels and rakes last fall to remove summer debris in flower beds near Ag Hall at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. From left, Elie Madsen, Shelby Kofler, Rene' Assels, Ambur Gossen and Abbie Feldt. (Larry Gossen / NCTA photo)

Online article: <https://go.unl.edu/v5xz>