



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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By Dean Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

NCTA is small town, USA

Happiness really is small town living. As newcomers to the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, Fay and I were able to experience the theme of this year's Fall Festival in the Curtis City Park. As we took in many of the weekend festivities, we agreed that we are truly blessed to be living in Curtis where we can experience small town living at its best.

From the sirens to start the parade, the pride and patriotism of the community was evident and on full display. The time spent honoring America and our troops with the color guard carrying the flags, and the awesome job of the Medicine Valley High School Band's rendition of the National Anthem, set the day off on the right foot.

Watching the kiddos scurry for candy thrown from the floats reminded me of how vibrant a community we have with a variety of age ranges. Not to mention, but Grand Marshall Bob Furrow sure doesn't look 100 years old to me! Happy Birthday Bob.

It was also enjoyable to meet new friends as we wandered through the park that afternoon. We had nice discussions about our Kansas roots with Marv Henry, talking NCTA history with Del Van Der Werff, and making connections with Vineyard Pastor Tim Jones and family.

Saturday afternoon also provided opportunities for enjoying the amazing barbeque pork lunch provided by the MVHS Junior Class and watching a duck race down a concrete street. I must admit, I've only seen duck races take place in creeks or rivers, not down a hill using a fire hydrant as propulsion. What a great idea.

Maybe my favorite activity was watching the kids work their way up through the challenging climb to the top of the big slide. Tenacity and sometimes teamwork were needed to achieve the task.

From quilt shows to axe throwing, from the dunk tank and ranch rodeo to the Sunday worship service and hot dog lunch, the small-town experience was at its finest. Great job to the members of the Chamber of Commerce planning committee and all the volunteers who made the weekend a success.

As I continue to meet people in town, I am so excited to hear stories about their connection to NCTA. They either worked here, attended "when it was a high school," or knew someone who worked here at some point. NCTA and the Curtis community are so important to each other.

We were sorry to hear of the recent passing of one of those long-time professors of NCTA, Richard Hald. Through the University of Nebraska Foundation, several memorial gifts have been directed back to NCTA and will be used to honor his memory as a horticulture professor. These gifts will help launch a landscape project in front of the historic Ag Hall.

Our campus team continues to work on several projects around campus and I hope that you will begin to see some improvements in aesthetics and overall efficiencies both outdoors and inside facilities during the next year.

We also have several activities wrapping up September and leading our Aggies into October including a graduation reception on Saturday for our 2020 graduates who were not able to enjoy a live, in-person ceremony in May. We look forward to welcoming back many of these students for the weekend.

The NCTA Stock Dog Trials are Saturday and Sunday at the indoor arena of the Livestock Teaching Center. Aggie Rodeo competed at Mid-Plains rodeo in North Platte last weekend and will be traveling to Fort Dodge, Iowa this coming weekend. The NCTA Shotgun Sports team hosts the Prairie Circuit Conference for college teams from seven states in North Platte this weekend. Intramural sports are also in full swing with football on Monday nights and volleyball starting soon.

Finally, it's exciting to see harvest getting underway, knowing that we all owe our farmers and ranchers a huge debt of gratitude for feeding the world and keeping food on our tables. Let's enjoy this beautiful fall weather, continue to pray for rain, and be thankful for our community, our heritage, our country, and most importantly, our freedom.

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 numerous 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.



NCTA Stock Dog Team members walked in the parade and helped with games in City Park. (NCTA photos)

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