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Subject: Cooperation in Nebraska - December issue
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Nebraska Cooperative Council's Newsletter



Cooperation in Nebraska

December 30, 2022

ANNUAL MEETING & HALL OF FAME

The 77th Annual Meeting of the Nebraska Cooperative Council was held in Kearney on November 16th, 2022. The meeting was held at the Younes North Conference Center. A total of 227 members and guests attended.

Council Board Chair David Briggs of Alliance kicked off the annual meeting by welcoming members and special guests, recognizing sponsors, and offering his Chairman's report. Council President Rocky Weber then provided the financial report and President's report. Rocky highlighted the state and federal issues the Council is engaged in that impact cooperative members.

Following these reports, Election Committee Chairman Bart Moseman announced that Jeff Loschen, Board Chair of CPI, was elected for a 2-year producer position on the NCC Board of Directors. Tim Rowe, Board Chair of Country Partners, was re-elected to the 4-year producer position and Jeremy Wilhelm, CEO of Frontier, was re-elected to the 4-year manager position. It was also announced that Cary Sandell from CoBank was elected to serve as the Participating Members Representative for a 2-year term. The Council congratulates these directors and thanks them for their willingness to serve in support of Nebraska's cooperative system.

A copy of the minutes is linked [here](#). Please notify the Council at debm@nebr.coop by January 9 if there are any objections or errors. If none are received, the minutes shall be deemed accepted as distributed.

After the business session, recognition clocks were presented to Dave Beckman, Mike Hechtner, and Ed Woeppel. Dave served on the NCC Board of Directors for 10 years, including 6 years as Secretary, 4 years on the Legislative Advisory Committee, and 7 years on the Excellence in Cooperative Education Committee. Mike served on the Council's Board for 14 years as a Participating Member Representative. Mike's input and expertise were invaluable to the Board in those years. Ed retired in June of 2022 after 23 years of service to the Nebraska Cooperative Council and its members. Ed has educated a generation of cooperative directors and managers and students in that time.

The Nebraska Cooperative Council and its members were delighted to induct 2 extremely deserving cooperators into the Nebraska Cooperative Council Hall of Fame: Don Anthony and Dave Thomsen. Congratulations to Don and Dave on their well-earned induction into the NCC Cooperative Hall of Fame.

For the Annual Meeting's finale, Sean Swarner shared his inspirational story. Sean overcame seemingly

insurmountable odds to beat cancer twice in his childhood. Then he decided to continue beating the odds to inspire others to do the same, climbing the tallest mountain on all 7 continents though he only has 1 functional lung.

After the meeting adjourned, the annual membership reception was held which gave all members and supporters time to enjoy fellowship, food and drinks.

Thank you to these members and supporting organizations for co-sponsoring this successful Annual Meeting:

PLATINUM

AGP
CoBank
EBM Construction
Marsh McLennan Agency
ProValue Insurance
Summit Carbon Solutions

GOLD

Associated Benefits Corp.
BNSF Railway
CHS
Crosby Guenzel
Gallagher
Land O'Lakes
Lockton Companies
Main Street America Group / Farm, Ranch
& Agribusiness
United Benefits Group

SILVER

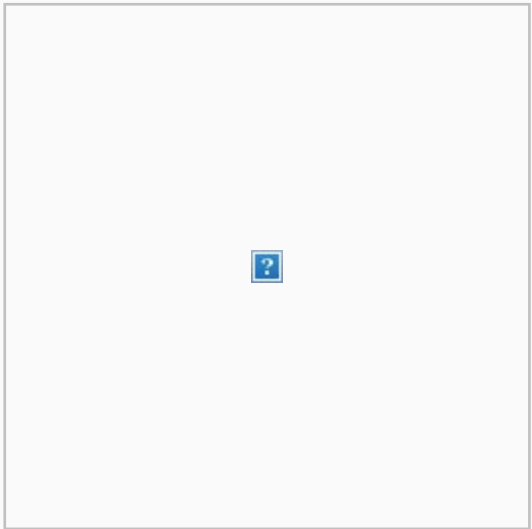
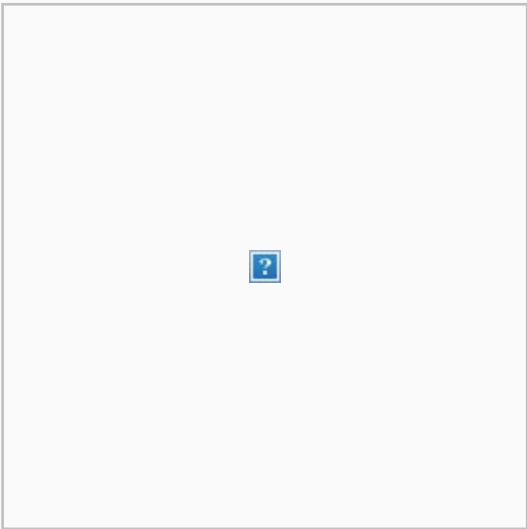
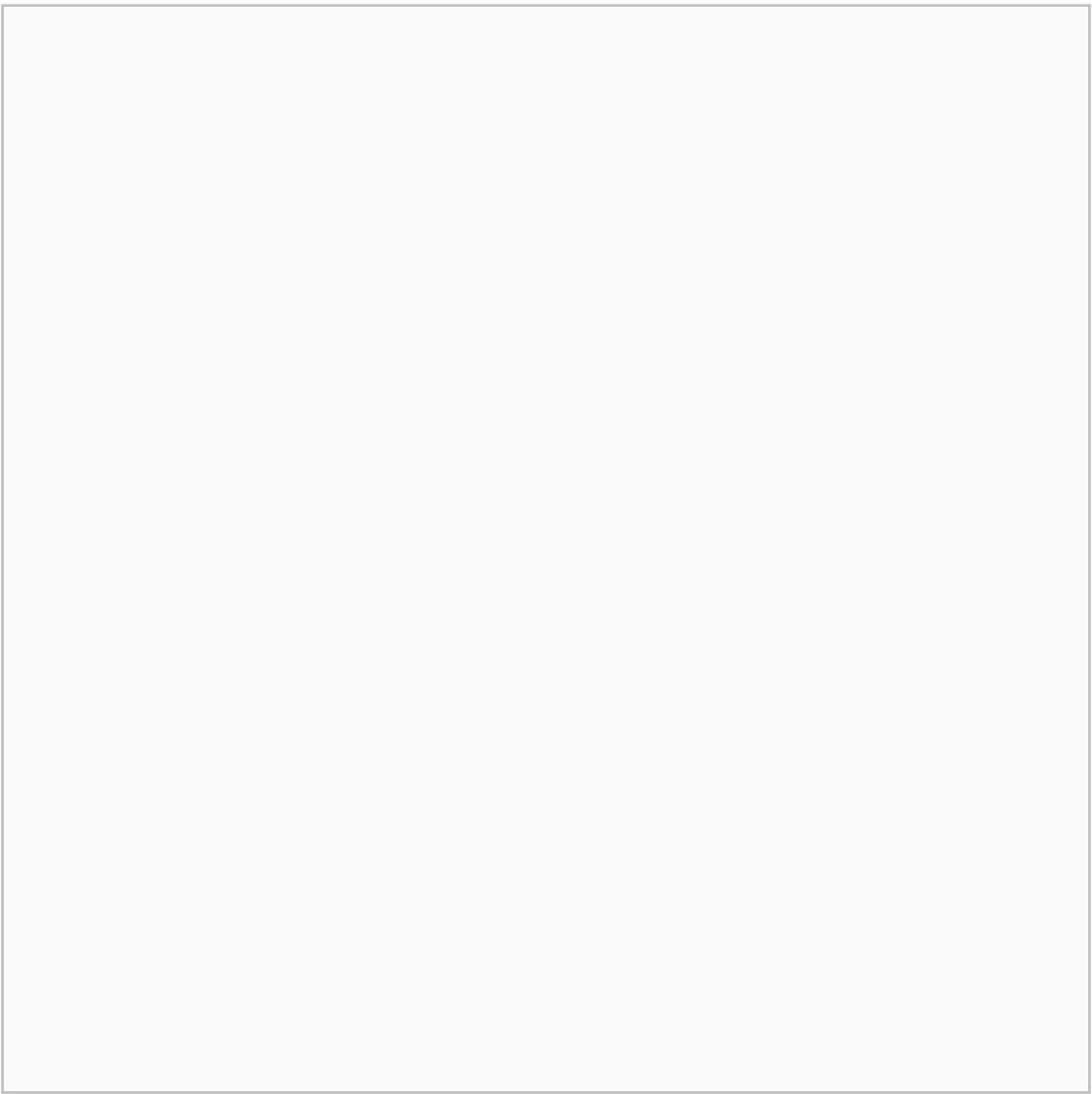
Kelley Plucker
McPherson Concrete Storage Systems

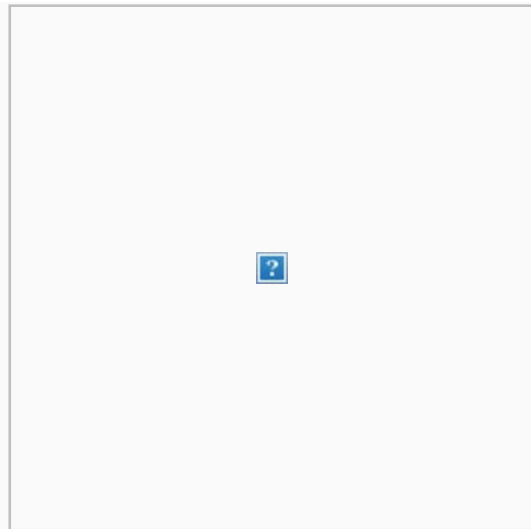
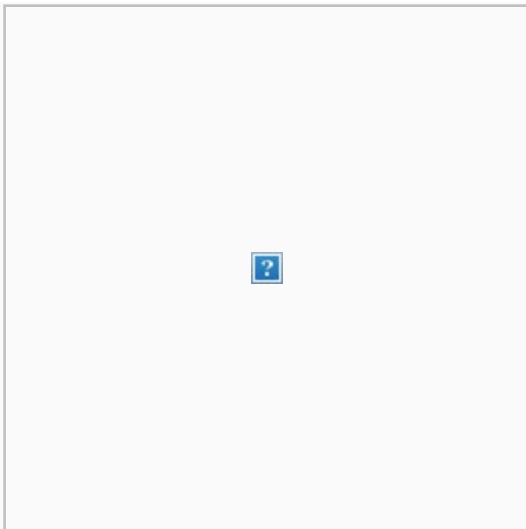
BRONZE

BerganKDV
GROWMARK
Milliman, Inc
Nebraska Corn Board
Nebraska Rural Radio Assn
Stifel - Olson Financial Group
StoneX Financial
The Cooperative Finance Assn

HALL OF FAME SPONSORS

Gardiner+Company
Country Partners Co-op
CHS





Pictured above:

Top: NCC President Rocky Weber and NCC Board Chair David Briggs convene the 77th Annual Meeting of the Nebraska Cooperative Council

Row 2 left: Keynote speaker Sean Swarner shares his inspirational story

Row 2 right: Hall of Fame inductee Don Anthony and his wife Linda with David Briggs and Rocky Weber

Row 3 left: Hall of Fame Inductee Dave Thomsen with his Gardiner+Company friends

Row 3 right: Enjoying time for fellowship, food and drinks

COMPLETED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Director/Manager Workshop

The day after the Annual Meeting, the Council brought in experts to share important information with 112 cooperative CEOs, management and board members. The theme for the 2022 Director/Manager Workshop was Whirlwinds: Managing the Labor, Weather, and Economic Challenges to Your Cooperative. A special thanks to Farm Credit Services of America for hosting the lunch and breaks for this workshop.

The labor shortage is one of the largest challenges facing Nebraska's cooperatives today. Kristi Boswell and Eileen Scofield from Alston & Bird discussed the status of labor and immigration policies and how cooperatives should navigate them.

Next, ag commodities expert Shawn Hackett discussed climate cycles and the impact he anticipates they will have on the price of grain moving forward.

The finale for the program was Ken Zuckerberg, lead analyst and senior economist with CoBank. Ken discussed several global and national economic trends and how they might impact cooperatives.

Leadership Luncheon Series

The 2022 Leadership Luncheon virtual program took place on December 13th and 20th. Dr. Richard Leblanc, Professor of Governance, Law, and Ethics at York University, discussed what healthy board governance and relations looks like for a cooperative. Dr. Leblanc shared valuable information and experiences with the 71 attendees. Identifying needed Board competencies and building board succession plans for officers and board members was a featured topic of the program.

UPCOMING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

There are multiple opportunities for cooperative directors and staff to participate in continuing

education in the coming months. Click [here](#) for our 2022/2023 education booklet to see details on each upcoming program.

Director Certification Program

The Director Certification Program will take place in Kearney on January 4th and 5th. Dr. Keri Jacobs, Associate Professor of Ag and Applied Economics at the University of Missouri; Brook Stromer, Vice President with CoBank's Regional Agribusiness Banking Group; and Amy Ryan, Senior Compensation and HR Consultant with Foundations Consulting, will facilitate Phases 3 and 4. Neil Stedman, Chairman of the Board for Frontier Cooperative, and Don Truhe, retired General Manager of the Southeast Farmers Cooperative in South Dakota, will provide expertise from their experiences in a panel. Following an evening reception and dinner, Colonel David Fivecoat, retired U.S. Army officer who led four combat tours over 41 months, will be the keynote speaker. The DCP registration form is [here](#).

Graduate Director Seminar

The 2023 Graduate Seminar will take place in Kearney on January 4th and 5th, running concurrently with the Director Certification Program. It is for directors who have completed all four phases of DCP and have served on their board for several years. Bill Kutilek, an attorney Crosby Guenzel LLP, will present on legal foundations and offer a bylaw refresher. Dr. Jody Herchenbach, University of Nebraska-Kearney Assistant Professor of Agribusiness, will share her doctoral study of cooperative board skills and conduct an exercise to assist board member in developing a plan for seeking board members that have skills identified as needed on the board of directors. Colonel David Fivecoat will present a program on Leading Strategic Change by developing the skills to think strategically. DCP registrants will join in with GDS during the evening reception, dinner, and keynote speaker Col. David Fivecoat. CoBank will host the evening reception and dinner. Late registration is still available for the Graduate Director Seminar. The form for registration is [here](#).

Mult-State Webinar w/ Dr Pippa Malmgren

The Nebraska Cooperative Council is partnering with the state councils of Iowa, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Kansas for a virtual program on January 12th from 10-11:30am (CT). Dr. Pippa Malmgren will discuss geopolitical and geoeconomic issues affecting agriculture. The registration form is [here](#).

Board Leadership Seminar

The 2023 Board Leadership Seminar will take place on February 21st at the Omaha Hilton. NCC President Rocky Weber and Bill Kutilek, attorney at Crosby Guenzel LLP, will help attendees gain an understanding of leadership requirements for board members and current issues directors must deal with to help their cooperative effectively serve its member owners. The BLS registration form is [here](#).

COOPERATIVE MONTH

October was Co-op Month, and the Council spent the month raising awareness about the importance of cooperatives to our state under the theme of Co-op's Build Economic Power. Governor Ricketts signed a [proclamation](#) declaring October as Cooperative Month. The Council also presented Governor Ricketts with a [plaque](#), honoring him as a Nebraska Cooperator for his consistent support of Nebraska's cooperatives.

The Council also worked with KOLN/KGIN to air a series of interviews focused on Cooperative Month. The Council's [NCC in the News page](#) has links to Jeremy Wilhelm, Carl Dickinson, Allan Zumpfe, and Rocky Weber discussing how Nebraska's cooperatives build economic power. Rocky was also interviewed by Nebraska Rural Radio regarding Co-op Month.





Joining NCC President Rocky Weber and Governor Pete Ricketts at the proclamation signing ceremony were (back L-R) Gary Brandt, CPI; Jeremy Wilhelm, Frontier Co-op; Dean Thernes, Farmers Pride; Mike Hechtner, CoBank; Allan Zumpfe, Farmers Co-op-Dorchester; and Jeff Krejdl, Ag Valley Co-op

NEBRASKA COOPERATIVE COUNCIL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Nebraska Cooperative Council Education Foundation was formed to provide new sources of funding to promote the cooperative business model. Since 1993, the Foundation has provided 231 scholarships totaling \$313,600; provided support for the Nebraska FFA Cooperative Speaking Event; conducted Co-op 101 presentations on college campuses; and helped fund a Cooperative Intern Retreat. These investments have a positive long-term impact regarding the value of cooperatives. If you are interested in supporting these projects, please click [here](#).

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Scholarship Program began in 1993, and since that time 231 scholarships totaling \$313,600 have been awarded. Applications are now being accepted for the 2023/24 academic year with a deadline of

April 15th. Promotional materials and application forms can be found [here](#).

CO-OP 101s

This fall, the Council offered Co-op 101 presentations at Southeast Community College in Beatrice, Central Community College in Hastings, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, and the University of Nebraska-Kearney. In total, the Council discussed the benefits of cooperatives with 105 students.

LINCOLN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: HERE WE GROW EXHIBIT

The Lincoln Children's Museum is in the process of developing a permanent agriculture exhibit under the theme of *Here We Grow*. The NCC-Education Foundation has entered into an agreement with LCM to co-sponsor the Exhibit along with several other agricultural groups based in Nebraska. The Exhibit will have cooperative elements woven into the agricultural exhibit and will present farmer cooperatives as a part of Nebraska agriculture.

NCC COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

As announced at the Annual Meeting, Jeff Loschen was elected for a 2-year producer position on the NCC Board of Directors; Jeremy Wilhelm and Tim Rowe were re-elected to the Board, and Cary Sandell was elected to serve as the Participating Members Representative. The Board will hold an officer re-organization meeting as part of its February 2023 meeting. At the November Board meeting the Board appointed committee members for the Councils Standing Committees: Click [here](#) for the new committee makeup, which becomes effective January 1st, 2023.

THANK YOU PROVALUE

The Board of Directors and Staff of the Council would like to recognize the Board of Directors and Management of ProValue Insurance (a Supporting Member of NCC) for its recent unsolicited donation of \$50,000 to the Nebraska Cooperative Council. The purpose of this donation was to provide support to the Council as it pursues its mission to defend, protect and enhance Nebraska's agricultural cooperatives through its various programs.

Responding to this generous donation, David Briggs, Council Chairman, stated that: "On behalf of the cooperative membership of the Nebraska Cooperative Council, we appreciate this generous support from ProValue Insurance, a valued industry partner, which will reinforce the ability of the Council to continue to evolve to assist its member cooperatives in meeting the challenges of today and in the future." A sincere THANK YOU to ProValue Insurance for this generous donation.

FEDERAL AND STATE ISSUES

The Council, in cooperation with the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and the Ag Workforce Coalition urged the Senate to include amendments to the H2-A program that would make the program year around, freeze the AEWR wage rate for two years and make it easier for cooperatives to administer the program. These efforts include industry letters to Senate leadership and a virtual meeting held by representatives of the Nebraska Cooperative Council and Senator Deb Fischer on November 15th. Unfortunately, Senate leadership blocked the efforts of Colorado Senator Bennett to include such legislation in the year end omnibus passed at the close of the current Congress.

The 108th legislative session of the Nebraska Legislature commences on January 4, 2023. Approximately 1/3 of the Legislature will be new Senators. They will elect a new Speaker and committee chairmen. These changes along with Governor-Elect Pillen being sworn in to begin his term will bring significant changes to the legislative process.

The Nebraska Public Service Commission will have a bill introduced that will update Grain Warehouse and Grain Dealer Statutes. The Council participated in an informal hearing on these issues with representatives of the Public Service Commission on November 15th as well as testifying at an interim study hearing of the Legislature's Agriculture Committee on December 2nd. The amendments will include an increase in fees, possibly an increase in bonding requirements, and certain definitional changes. As part of this process the Council is asking that a Bill be introduced that would deregulate storage and handling rate setting for Nebraska licensed grain warehouses.

Earlier in 2022, the Council requested that the Public Service Commission increase the storage rates on most commodities by 50% to cover increased costs of labor, insurance, and maintenance and construction that grain warehouses have experienced. The Council was successful in this effort with the PSC granting the request in August of 2022. Federally licensed warehouses and state warehouses in neighboring states have no regulatory process setting grain storage rates, letting the market determine rates. The Council will be seeking to eliminate this regulatory process in Nebraska.

The Council also attended an interim hearing of the Agriculture Committee on the issue of safeguarding pollinators. While we did not testify at the hearing, we wanted to see if there would be any new efforts to regulate crop protection products. While neonicotinoids and pesticides were discussed as part of the challenges to the pollinator population, testifiers acknowledge there was little hard evidence indicating pesticides were a primary challenge. We will be carefully watching this issue to see if any legislation is offered.

At the request of the membership, the Council will have a Bill introduced on its behalf that will increase the Small Claims Court jurisdiction from the current \$3,700 to \$10,000. This will make it easier for cooperatives to obtain judgements on more accounts without having to resort to expensive litigation.

The Council's Legislative Advisory Committee will meet on January 23rd in Lincoln to review legislation introduced that may impact agricultural cooperatives and take positions on that legislation.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- **January 4-5, 2023** - Director Certification Program Phases 3 & 4 - Kearney, Holiday Inn
- **January 4-5, 2023** - Graduate Director Seminar - Kearney, Holiday Inn
- **January 12, 2023** - Multi-State Webinar with Dr. Pippa Malmgren
- **February 21, 2023** - Board Leadership Seminar - Omaha, Hilton
- **June 14, 2023** - Cooperative Intern Retreat - Kearney, Younes Conference Center South
- **November 15, 2023** - Annual Meeting, Hall of Fame Ceremony and Reception - Kearney, Younes Conference Center North
- **November 16, 2023** - Director/Manager Workshop - Kearney, Younes Conference Center North

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Council welcomes the following new members for 22/23:

Out-of-State Cooperative

MKC - Moundridge, KS

Supporting Members

Summit Carbon Solutions - Ames, IA
Bergan KDV - Waterloo, IA
USI Insurance - Omaha

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