

Deb Mazour

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To: Deb Mazour
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Cooperation in Nebraska

a newsletter of the Nebraska Cooperative Council

September 25, 2020

Annual Meeting

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board of Directors has decided that the Council's 75th Annual Meeting will be held virtually this year on November 18th. The Board felt that to conduct a face-to-face Annual Meeting would risk the health and safety of many of our members. In addition, due to the social distancing requirements, an in-person meeting would have differed greatly from previous Annual Meetings.

We are planning the virtual meeting to be held in the afternoon on November 18th. Details and registration information for the virtual Annual Meeting will be forwarded in October.

Hall of Fame

With the Annual Meeting being a virtual event in November, the Board of Directors also concluded that we will not be inducting anyone in the NCC Cooperative Hall of Fame in 2020. The Board felt that due to having a virtual Annual Meeting, we would not be able to provide the proper recognition that a Hall of Fame inductee deserves. All nominations that were under consideration for 2020, will be carried over for an additional year of consideration.

Co-op Month

October is Cooperative Month and an opportunity to share the success story of Nebraska's farmer owned cooperatives! On September 10th, Governor Pete Ricketts declared October 2020 as Cooperative Month in Nebraska - [click here for the proclamation](#). This coincides with the annual recognition of October as national Cooperative Month by the United States Department of Agriculture.

On September 21, 2020, we forwarded a press release ([linked here](#)) to statewide newspapers and radio stations. Please feel free to use it in your own newsletters or as a template to create your own letter reciting your cooperative's accomplishments on behalf of your patron owners.

At the Council level, we are also preparing several appearances on local television and statewide radio that will highlight the attributes of the cooperative business model in practice in Nebraska. You should also feel free to engage in any media promotion about your local cooperative and Cooperative Month that you feel is appropriate.

Education Programs

The Council's education programs for 2020/21 will also move to a virtual platform. We realize the importance of face-to-face interaction and the opportunities for networking among directors that in person programs provide. However, due to the uncertainties surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and its affect on social gatherings we will not be able to provide programs in the way we are accustomed to doing. We are working with our various presenters to provide the best possible programs by virtual delivery. More details on our 20/21 virtual education programs will be forwarded to you in the near future; however, the dates have been established as follows:

- **Director/Manager Workshop** via Zoom on December 8, 2020 - We are in the process of finalizing plans for Brett Sciotto from Aimpoint Research to return this year to update the “Farmer of the Future” with the latest research detailing how the Covid-19 pandemic and likely changes that will come in the post pandemic will impact the farm supply and grain businesses. The program will build on that which was featured at the 2019 Director Manager Workshop. Stay tuned for more details.
- **Director Certification Program** via Zoom - All four phases of DCP will be offered in 2021 with Phase 1 on January 4, Phase 2 on January 5, Phase 3 on January 6, and Phase 4 on January 7.
- **Graduate Director Seminar** via Zoom on February 3, 2021- Dr. Scott Downey from Purdue will lead us through “market segmentation” and how that correlates to the Farmer of the Future.
- **Board Leadership Seminar** is tentatively scheduled for February 25, 2021. Final details are still being worked on. We will update you on the final program when those details are finalized.

While virtual education programming does bring certain challenges, it also provides the Council the opportunity to offer short programs from time to time that are of topical value to our member cooperatives’ management teams and board of directors. As these opportunities arise watch for notices of education workshops that via Zoom can be easily accessed and minimize travel time with lower expenses.

Nebraska Legislature Adjourns

The 2020 session convened on January 8th, adjourned on March 25th due to Covid-19, reconvened on July 20th and finished the final days before adjourning the session on August 13th. Six senators finished their terms and are not eligible for re-election due to term limits. They are: Lincoln Senator Kate Bolz, Omaha Senator Ernie Chambers, Bellevue Senator Sue Crawford, Omaha Senator Sara Howard, Omaha Senator Rick Kolowski, and Norfolk Senator and Speaker Jim Scheer.

Throughout the session, the Council updated the membership via Legislative Updates including the final one, *Legislative Update 8*, [linked here](#).

The 2021 session will convene on January 6, 2021 for a 90-day session. We are in the process of preparing bills that will deal with the fertilizer and ag chemical statutory liens (extending the 60-day limitation for filing) as well as having legislation ready in the event there are conflicts with lienholders regarding grain storage and handling charges.

PAC Interviews

The Council's NCC-PAC Committee conducted 17 interviews of state senator candidates in LaVista and Lincoln on July 7-9. The NCC-PAC was established and continues to be a significant part of the Council's overall legislative program. As the urban areas of the state continue to grow in population, it is important that the Council has access to the state senators serving those areas. Through the PAC, the Council has the opportunity to communicate with and educate state senators regarding issues that are important to cooperatives and rural Nebraska.

Following the interviews, the NCC-PAC provided campaign donations totaling \$40,800 to 31 legislative candidates in 20 legislative races.

Prior to the interviews, candidates were provided information about cooperatives include a guide with (1) an overview of the Council and cumulative figures for the impact cooperatives have on Nebraska's economy; (2) a map of the cooperative locations in each legislative district; (3) an individualized Fact Sheet for each cooperative member with the headquarters and all branch locations and other pertinent information; (4) and a Fact Sheet on the regional cooperatives in Nebraska and their impact on Nebraska's economy.



Cooperative Intern & New Hire Retreat

Due to Covid-19, the Council was forced to change the delivery method for our Cooperative Intern Retreat. In order to safely offer this program we hosted three one-hour Zoom meetings during the week of July 20th. The first session focused on a bit of cooperative history and how and why cooperatives have formed over the years. The session also laid out the fundamentals of how cooperatives are governed and how they differ from other business models. Rocky Weber and Ed Woeppel facilitated this session.

Session 2 featured three Cooperative CEOs that spent the entire time taking questions from the interns in three separate chat rooms. This proved to be a popular program for the interns. CEO's Carl Dickinson from CVA, Tod Clark of Country Partners and Allan Zumpf from Farmers Cooperative served as facilitators for the program.

The final session was a panel discussion with three young cooperative board members. This session focused on the value that these young members derive from the cooperative, how the cooperative adds value to their farming operation and what they expect from their cooperatives. Panelists were Jerrad Stroh from CPI, Chris Beins from the Aurora Co-op and Ryan Sukraw from CountryPartners. Again this was a very popular session.

A comment that we received from one of the participants perhaps said it best: "My teams biggest take was that most co-ops are all built on the same principals, that our goal is to service our producers the best we can and to do everything possible to make their job easier. Additionally they found it interesting that Co-ops are farmer owned and gives us a better understanding of why we try to do so much to give back to the communities that we serve in. They thought that this webinar was worth their attendance and time because it helped them understand a more broad spectrum of why we do some things the way that we do."

Since this program was delivered virtually, we widened the scope to include new hires within the cooperative. A total of 76 interns and 14 new hires took part in the program.

FFA Cooperative Speaking Contest

The Nebraska Cooperative Council once again provided sponsorship to the Nebraska FFA Association for the Cooperative Speaking Event. This marks the 69th consecutive year that the Council has provided support for this important agricultural youth organization. Due to Covid-19 this years event looked much different than previous year. The event was scheduled to be held during the State FFA Convention in early April, however when the convention was canceled plans changed.

Through efforts by the FFA Association staff and the high school Ag Teachers in the state the contest was conducted via Zoom on June 26th. Certainly this was a very different way of conducting the event, however it was good to see the determination of the teachers and students to finish the process.

A total of 11 students participated in the virtual State contest. Jadyne Burenheide of the Howells Dodge FFA Chapter took top honors in the 2020 competition and received a trophy, first place medal, and check for \$250 from the NCC Education Foundation. Second place went to Abby Scholz of the BerMis Chapter along with a medal and check for \$125. Third place went to Hailey Goering of the Humphrey FFA Chapter who received a medal and check for \$75.

Also receiving medals in the competition and the FFA chapters they represent were:

- **Gold** - Grace Popken, Mead
- **Silver** - Jenny Goesch, Boyd County; Brynn Holtmeier, Meridian; Kaylee Noel, Shickley; Alex Worthing, Arthur
- **Bronze** - Cody Maricle, Boone Central; Kendall Stemper, Alma; Morgan Wallinger, Stuart

Once again we want to thank the State FFA Association, the Ag Teachers and the students for following through with this event. Their determination shows the value of taking a bad situation, making adjustments and providing the best possible solution available for the future leaders of rural Nebraska.

NCCEF Scholarships Awarded

The NCC Education Foundation awarded 11 scholarships totaling \$31,000 for the 2021/22 academic year. The recipients are:

\$3,000 Scholarship in Honor of Robert C. Andersen

- **Emma Goosic**, daughter of Andy & Jessica Goosic of Franklin, will be a junior at UNL majoring in agribusiness. The Goosic's are members of Aurora Co-op Elevator Company headquartered in Aurora and CPI headquartered in Hastings.

\$3,000 Scholarships in Honor of Michael S. Turner

- **Wesley Wach**, son of Loran & Nancy Wach of Wauneta, will be a junior at UNL majoring in agricultural economics. The Wach's are members of Frenchman Valley Farmers Co-op headquartered in Imperial, Hi-Line Co-op headquartered in Elsie, and Hayes County Farmers Co-op headquartered in Hayes Center.
- **Maria Harthoorn**, daughter of Barry & Sue Harthoorn of Ainsworth, will be a junior at UNL majoring in agricultural economics. The Harthoorn's are members of CVA headquartered in York and are customers of Farm Credit Services of America headquartered in Omaha.
- **Kyle Leners**, son of Scott & Laurie Leners of Filley, will be a senior at UNL majoring in agribusiness. The Leners' are members of Farmers Cooperative headquartered in Dorchester.
- **Alice McDonald**, daughter of John & Susan McDonald of Phillips, will be a senior at UNL majoring in agricultural economics. The McDonald's are members of Aurora Co-op Elevator Company headquartered in Aurora, CVA headquartered in York, and CPI headquartered in Hastings.
- **Elizabeth Yrkoski**, daughter of Joseph & Mary Yrkoski of Fullerton, will be a senior at UNL majoring in agricultural economics. The Yrkoski's are members of CVA headquartered in York and Frontier Co-op headquartered in Lincoln.

- **Callie Dethlefs**, daughter of Gary & Darlene Dethlefs of Rockville, will be a senior at UNL majoring in agribusiness. The Dethlefs' are members of Farmers Co-op Association headquartered in Ravenna.
- **Alyssa Moser**, daughter of Chris & Sandy Moser of Clearwater, will be a freshman at UNL majoring in agricultural economics. The Moser's are members of CVA headquartered in York.
- **Michael Gibbens**, son of Jeff & Michelle Gibbens of Comstock, will be a junior at UNK majoring in agribusiness. The Gibbens' are members of Country Partners Co-op headquartered in Gothenburg.

\$2,000 Scholarships in Honor of Michael S. Turner

- **Taylor Sayer**, daughter of Jared & Julie Sayer of Cambridge, will be a 2nd year student at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) at Curtis majoring in ag production systems. The Sayer's are members of Ag Valley Co-op headquartered in Edison.
- **James Lee**, son of Richard & Jodi Lee of Sutherland, will be a 1st year student at NCTA majoring in agribusiness. The Lee's are members of Hi-Line Co-op headquartered in Elsie.

Big Changes Coming in 2021



At a special meeting of the Board of Directors held on August 21, 2020, the Board approved the Council leasing office space in the Hruska Law Center, 635 S. 14th Street in Lincoln commencing January 1, 2021. The Council has been a tenant in our current office building for nearly 51 years, having moved in on November 14, 1969. The current office space lease expires on December 31, 2020.

The new space is directly across the street to the west of the State Capitol, and while smaller in square feet, offers, in addition to an excellent location near state policymakers, a Board room large enough for the Council's board to meet as well as excellent meeting space for the Council to meet with state senators, legislative staff and other organizations as we further the legislative and

regulatory policy goals of the membership. In addition, the building offers a large classroom space available to building tenants that will allow us to hold the LAC meeting, PAC Interviews, and other Lincoln based activities of the Council in the same building, immediately adjacent to the office.

We hope to have the relocation of the office complete in mid-December, in plenty of time to be ready for the commencement of the 2021 Legislative Session.

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