EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 2012 and with the leadership of its founding executive director since December 2013, the Rural Futures Institute (RFI) at the University of Nebraska has stimulated significant multidisciplinary work on behalf of rural people and places, resulting in scholarship, increased connections between the University and stakeholders and tangible results in rural communities.

This work was accomplished with 1,528 University of Nebraska (NU) administrators, faculty, staff and students from the four NU campuses as well as more than 96 partners and 201 rural communities dedicated to addressing critical rural issues and opportunities.

To continue the University of Nebraska's results-oriented commitment to rural communities in Nebraska and beyond, RFI underwent a rigorous six-month strategic planning process with consultants Dr. Jay Azarow and Lawrence Patrick III as well as 95 contributors. Through this process, RFI solidified its mission to harness the intellectual energy and resources of the University of Nebraska and its partners to positively impact the future of humankind. RFI also defined its ultimate goal—a thriving high-touch, high-tech future for rural Nebraska and the Great Plains by 2040. Audacious in scope, this goal requires a sturdy foundation of leadership with strategic foresight, combined with a mobilized team that actively forges strong connections and effectively communicates to diverse stakeholder groups.

This document provides all elements of a full mission statement, including a purpose, the belief statements and core values RFI has established to guide its work and the ultimate goal for the Institute. It then outlines RFI’s short-term “Roadmap to 2020,” which includes target objectives to gauge progress and success. RFI will intentionally connect students, communities and faculty to stimulate discovery and innovation; foster research and apply future-focused ideas and evidence-based practices; and recognize scholars, leaders, entrepreneurs and funders to elevate the voice of rural worldwide. These initial steps will allow RFI to build to its long-term strategies, which are discussed in this document. At the conclusion of the document are five appendices that provide context of RFI’s work to this point as well as details of the strategic planning process.
MISSION

PURPOSE

We believe that for America to truly thrive, our rural residents and communities must thrive. We’ve learned that growing and sustaining a vibrant rural sector takes: future-focused leadership and entrepreneurship; social as well as technological capital and connectedness; the wise use of natural, agricultural and cultural resources; and rich collaborations. We harness the intellectual energy and resources of the University of Nebraska and its partners to positively impact the future of humankind.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe in people's capacity to shape their own futures.

We believe “communities” are not just localities, but also networked groups of individuals working together toward a common goal and shared purpose.

We believe “leaders” are known by their vision, ideas, energy, passion and engagement in collective action.

We believe “entrepreneurs” are individuals and communities that combine strategic foresight and grit to take action to reach their desired futures.

We believe diverse and inclusive leadership is needed to propel communities forward.

We believe our complex future requires mutual respect and collaboration between rural and urban regions and communities.

GOAL

A thriving high-touch, high-tech future for rural Nebraska and the Great Plains by 2040.

RFI established this goal in the context of Jim Collin's "Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG)" construct—the long-term goal of the organization that is inspirational and energizing.

CORE VALUES

Future-Focus
We seek new possibilities at the intersection of strategic foresight, advancing technologies and what it means to be human.

Trust
We work with utmost character—integrity, reliability and fairness.

Respect
We recognize the value of all people and honor diverse perspectives.

Collaboration
We bring people and disparate ideas together to solve complex, interconnected problems.

Hopeful Grit
We value courageous perseverance, optimism and passionate confidence.
ROADMAP TO 2020

In the next three years, the Rural Futures Institute will focus on three strategic impact areas. RFI has established objectives in each area to advance the work of the University of Nebraska with communities and partners to reach a thriving rural future.

STRATEGIC IMPACT AREAS

CONVENE TO CREATE

Intentionally connect students, faculty and communities to stimulate discovery and innovation.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUTURE

Stimulate research and apply future-focused ideas and evidence-based practices designed to grow the body of knowledge.

CELEBRATE TO ELEVATE

Share stories of successes and solutions from scholars, leaders, entrepreneurs and funders to elevate the value and voice of rural nationwide while demonstrating the University of Nebraska’s leadership.

RFI NEXUS

We have determined that the central point of innovation for the highly complex nature of rural communities is where students, communities and faculty purposefully connect to (1) co-discover and co-create innovations that foster a positive future for rural residents and communities and (2) co-discover and co-create innovations for faculty and students in higher education designed to help the rural sector thrive. It is important to note how each group is defined. “Students” includes primary through adult learners, including traditional and non-traditional undergraduate and graduate students. “Communities” are not just localities, but also networked groups of people and communities of practice. “Faculty” includes the University of Nebraska and beyond.
To reach its ultimate vision for rural America, the Rural Futures Institute knows significant strategies are required. The University of Nebraska has the intellectual energy to help rural communities across the country establish and reach their goals. With a focus on leadership and scholarship, the long-term strategies on the following pages articulate the bold ideas necessary to reach a thriving high-touch, high-tech rural future by 2040.

**VISION STORY**

Rural America unleashes the full potential of its leadership, economic capacity, cultural creativity and natural resources, creating explicit value for small and large communities within and beyond its geography. Rural places have become the legitimate best choice for leaders, businesses, families, graduates and explorers. Rural people earn global respect for fueling the future of humankind.

With research and information at their fingertips as well as access to diverse perspectives and talents, **leaders choose** to thrive in rural America where they have multiple opportunities to make a significant impact on their communities and their world.

With access to a highly motivated, highly skilled workforce, technology and natural resources, **businesses choose** rural America to serve, launch, expand and compete globally.

With rural schools and daycares recruiting highly educated teachers, providing leading curriculum and creating unique engagement opportunities, **families choose** to raise children where they feel safe and connected to community.

With an instilled sense of grit and determination, **graduates choose** to stay in or return to rural America because of the leadership, employment, education and social opportunities that allow them to pursue their purpose.

With creative cultures and bustling main streets embedded in majestic landscapes, rich recreational opportunities and rugged outdoors, **explorers choose** to visit rural America to relax, reconnect and reenergize.
LONG-TERM STRATEGIES TO 2040

RURAL LEADERSHIP & FUTURING ACADEMY

Executive education-style programming presented as (1) an on-campus, tuition-based, instructor-led course focused on capacity building and leadership for future-focused rural leaders and (2) instructor-led, tuition-based online leadership course. This also includes a library of free, self-paced online classes. Incorporate a “hacking for rural” course where student teams work to solve complex problems critical to create thriving rural areas. Problem sets are crowdsourced from rural residents and leaders, and students refine their solutions in the real world.

DISTRIBUTED VIRTUAL LABORATORY FOR RURAL RESEARCH

Academic subject matter experts based in key research units and centers across the University assertively engage researchers to encourage them to focus on problems that impact rural areas. Using a model that is increasingly becoming the preferred approach of the National Science Foundation, RFI’s expert human “routers” also serve as a valuable resource to research teams by building interdisciplinary connections, bridging communication gaps across campuses and linking NU researchers with other academic researchers pursuing similar topics around the world.

RURAL CHALLENGE PRIZE

Major global prize competition designed to incentivize small teams to develop bold solutions to major problems facing rural communities. Teams can be faculty researchers, students, corporations and residents.

“The University of Nebraska’s Rural Futures Institute is a highly innovative, forward thinking entity that is catapulting the dedication, dialogue and direction needed to elevate and accentuate excellence in rural Nebraska and beyond. Its unparalleled ability to leverage partnerships and exploit talent is exactly what is needed to enhance the vitality of rural communities. Without a doubt, the RFI will be an increasingly critical player in advancing rural access to high quality health, education, and economic opportunity well into the future.”

—SUSAN M. SHERIDAN
DIRECTOR, NEBRASKA CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES & SCHOOLS,
GEORGE HOLMES UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
APPENDIX I:

RURAL FUTURES INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA ENGAGEMENT

BY POSITION

60
ADMINISTRATORS

165
FACULTY

33
STAFF

BY INSTITUTION

23
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

39
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY

125
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA–LINCOLN

48
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

24
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

“[RFI Competitive Awards] is important to me professionally because it gave me the opportunity to teach and mentor two graduate students in an applied research project.... I was able to expose students to rural communities to work in a team science environment to develop and implement mixed methods, community-engaged research project. This awards program also helped me to develop a line of research that I can grow in the future.”

–ATHENA RAMOS
COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM MANAGER/INSTRUCTOR
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

ENGAGEMENT COLOR KEY

RFI COMPETITIVE AWARDS
Principal investigator of awarded project or reviewer of proposals.

RFI CONFERENCES
Involved in RFI’s national conferences as a key advisor, member of a planning team or advisory committee and/or speaker.

RFI FELLOW
Current member of inaugural class of RFI Fellows.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP
Relationship outside of those previously mentioned that has and/or is resulting in action, service, programming, scholarship, etc., for the University of Nebraska and/or Nebraska’s rural communities.

ADMINISTRATION

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President

SUSAN FRITZ ● ● ●
Executive Vice President & Provost

MARK GUSTAFSON ● ●
Former Interim Executive Director, Rural Futures Institute at the University of Nebraska

RACHAEL HERPEL ● ● ●
Assistant Director, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska

ROBERT HINSON ●
Executive Director, National Strategic Research Institute at the University of Nebraska

DAVID JACKSON ●
Vice Provost

ROBERTO LENTON ●
Former Executive Director, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska

JAMES LINDER ●
Chief Strategist, University of Nebraska; President, University Technology Development Corporation

PETER McCORMICK ●
Executive Director, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska

SAMUEL MEISELS ●
Founding Executive Director, Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska
STAFF

KAREN HANSEN •
Proposal Development Coordinator, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska

SHAWN KASKIE • • •
Fellows Coordinator, Rural Futures Institute at the University of Nebraska

MELISSA LEE •
Director of Communications

JESSE STARITA • •
Education Outreach Associate, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska

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BOB WHITEHOUSE •
Chairman, District 4, University of Nebraska Board of Regents

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Director of Policy, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska

CHRISTOPHER NEALE •
Director of Research, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY

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DOUG KRISTENSEN • •
Chancellor

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MARC ALBRECHT •
Associate Professor, Biology

TODD BARTEE • • • •
Professor, Kinesiology & Sports Sciences

MATTHEW BICE •
Assistant Professor, Kinesiology & Sports Sciences

NATE BICKFORD • •
Associate Professor, Biology
“I believe the Rural Futures Institute is a critical element of the University of Nebraska system. It is one of the only organizations that focuses on the process of community engagement and working together. The University comes to life through RFI because we can work with communities to make a real impact—to share and to learn.”

—TODD BARTEE
PROFESSOR
KINESIOLOGY & SPORT SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY
CHRISTY KOSMICKI •
Lecturer, Art & Design

ANITA LORENTZEN •
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ODEE INGERSOLL •
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RICHARD MOCARSKI • •
Director, Sponsored Programs & Research Development
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA–LINCOLN

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ADMINISTRATION

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Dean, Agricultural Research Division

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Director & Chair, Center for Great Plains Studies

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Executive Chairman of Board of Advisors, Nebraska Innovation Studio

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Chancellor

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Dean & Director, Nebraska Extension

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Assistant Vice Chancellor, Office of Research & Economic Development

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dean, nebraska college of technical agriculture

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Director, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families & Schools

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Department Chair, Child, Youth & Family Studies

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Former Lecturer, Lied Center for Performing Arts

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Assistant Professor of Practice, College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources

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Geoscientist, School of Natural Resources

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Extension Associate Professor, Panhandle Research & Extension Center

TRENTEE BUSH •
Associate Professor, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

ROGER BUTTERS •
Former Associate Professor, College of Business Administration

RODRIGO CANTARERO •
Associate Professor, Community & Regional Planning
“We are always excited to work with the Rural Futures Institute. They are on an important mission, and they are so deeply engaged with so many rural communities. They understand the challenges these communities face and are open to creative solutions to these challenges.”

—SHANE FARRITOR
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF ADVISORS
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ANGELA PALMER-WACKERLY •
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STAFF

ISTIAQUE ALI • Database Developer & Analyst, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families & Schools

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THOMAS FARRELL • Former Senior Advisor to the Chancellor, International Affairs

CATHERINE HAUPTMAN • Administration Associate, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

KEVIN MARTIN • Advisor, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

KIM MATTHEWS • M/P Temporary Worker, Bureau of Sociological Research

CHARLOTTE NARJES • Coordinator of Special Projects, Agricultural Economics

KATIE NIELAND • Assistant Director & Communications Coordinator, Center for Great Plains Studies

ERIN POOR • Education & Community Engagement Director, Lied Center for Performing Arts

RESHELL RAY • Associate Director, East Campus Programs Student Involvement

REBECCA VOGT • Manager of Survey Research, Agricultural Economics

NICOLE WALL • Specialist Outreach & Research, School of Natural Resources
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

ENGAGEMENT COLOR KEY

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ADMINISTRATION

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Vice Chancellor for External Affairs

H. DELE DAVIES •
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

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Chancellor; Interim Chancellor, University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Executive Associate Dean, College of Allied Health Professions

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Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical Research; Chief Medical Officer, UNeHealth

JENNIFER LARSEN •
Vice Chancellor for Research

HOWARD LIU • •
Director, Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska; Assistant Vice Chancellor of Faculty Development

PAUL PAULMAN •
Associate Dean for Clinical Skills and Quality, Family Medicine

JULIE SEBASTIAN •
Dean, College of Nursing

JAMES TURPEN •
Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Executive Associate Dean for Graduate Studies
“Every opportunity to find new partners in workforce development is critical. I found the RFI Competitive Awards program to be supportive of innovation and willing to take risks to allow us to develop new pathways for rural students to find career opportunities in mental health.”

—Howard Liu
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Development
Director of the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska
University of Nebraska Medical Center
KIMBERLY McFARLAND  •  •  •  Associate Professor, College of Dentistry

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CAROL PULLEN  •  Professor, College of Nursing

ATHENA RAMOS  •  •  •  Community Health Program Manager/Instructor, College of Public Health

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JOHN REINHARDT  •  Professor, College of Dentistry

MICHAEL SITORIUS  •  •  Chair, College of Medicine

TARA SJUTS  •  Assistant Professor, Munroe-Meyer Institute

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ED VANDENBERG  •  Associate Professor, College of Medicine

SHINOBU WATANABE-GALLOWAY  •  Associate Professor, College of Public Health; Research Director for Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska

LANI ZIMMERMAN  •  Professor, College of Nursing

STAFF

KATHLEEN BRANDERT  •  Workforce & Leadership Development Manager; Instructor, Office of Public Health Practice; Director, Great Plains Leadership Institute

ANTONIA CORREA  •  Outreach Project Specialist, College of Public Health

ROXANNA JOKELA  •  Former Director, Alumni Relations

ANN KRAFT  •  Program Coordinator, College of Medicine

JILL MACK  •  Office Associate, Allied Health, Health Service Administration Division

SONJA RUSSELL  •  •  Education Outreach Program Manager, College of Public Health

NATALIA TRINIDAD  •  Outreach Project Associate, College of Public Health
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

ENGAGEMENT COLOR KEY

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ADMINISTRATION

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Dean, College of Public Affairs & Community Service

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Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic & Student Affairs

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Former Director, Nebraska Business Development Center

JOHN CHRISTENSEN •
Former Chancellor

LYNN HARLAND •
Associate Dean, College of Business Administration

CATHARINE LANG • •
State Director & Assistant Dean, Nebraska Business Development Center

B.J. REED • •
Senior Vice Chancellor, Academic & Student Affairs

FACULTY

JOSEPH ALLEN •
Associate Professor, College of Arts & Sciences

KIRAN BASTOLA •
Associate Professor, College of Information Science & Technology

ROBERT BLAIR • •
Professor, College of Public Affairs & Community Service
“I have studied and engaged in the formulation and management of development activities in rural communities for more than thirty years. The University plays a critical role, serving as a partner with local entities; and in my opinion, the Rural Futures Institute provides the most promising strategy to coordinate the resources and expertise of the University of Nebraska campuses in these efforts.”

—ROBERT BLAIR
PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA FOUNDATION

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ADMINISTRATION

LORI BYRNE ●
Senior Vice President

BRIAN HASTINGS ●
President & Chief Executive Officer

STAFF

DARLA HEGGEM ● ●
Director of Development, Rural Futures Institute at the University of Nebraska
“It’s wonderful to discover and to know through research, but with the Rural Futures Institute you get to see it in another light. This is great information, but now what does it mean in the real world? What does it mean to these communities? What can they pull from this?”

–JORDYN BADER
RFI STUDENT SERVICESHIP INTERN SUMMER 2013
RFI GRADUATE ASSISTANT SUMMER 2014-2015
RFI STUDENT SERVICESHIP

HOST COMMUNITIES

STUDENT SERVICESHIP INTERNS & HOMETOWNS

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West Point, NE

Bethany Blackburn
Bassett, NE

Emily Coffey
Lincoln, NE

Kelsey Anderson
Elkhorn, NE

Tyan Boyer
Plainview, NE

Emily Compas
Omaha, NE

Darcy Arends
Lincoln, NE

Tyler Brown
Bloomfield, NE

Alyssa Dye
Alliance, NE

Jordyn Bader
Ainsworth, NE

Amanda Burau
Chicago, IL

Courtney Feagans
Rensselaer, IN

Jessica Bartak
Ainsworth, NE

Amanda Clymer
David City, NE

Collin Fleecs
Sutherland, NE

*2016 & 2017
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<td>Cassie Thornburg</td>
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<td>Emilia Woeppel</td>
<td>Firth, NE</td>
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</table>
RFI STUDENT INTERNS

Selena Aguilar  
Grand Island, NE  
Journalism & Mass Communications  
Journalism, Advertising and Public Relations

Kodi Gehl  
Ericson, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Agricultural Banking & Finance

Alice Akers  
Bodyke, County Clare, Ireland  
Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communications  
Agricultural Communications

Molli Hagge  
Ord, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Agricultural Economics

Davis Behle  
Kearney, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Agribusiness

Maci Hunke  
Snyder, NE  
Education & Human Sciences  
Elementary and Special Education

Amber Burnheide  
Howells, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Applied Science

Kate Likens  
Swanton, NE  
Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication  
Agricultural Teacher Education

Sam Conner  
Lincoln, NE  
College of Engineering  
Computer Engineering

Jamie Mashino  
Spencer, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Agribusiness, Entrepreneurship

Haley Dallmann  
Blair, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Animal Science, International Agriculture, & Entrepreneurship

Julia Oestmann  
Johnson, NE  
Journalism & Mass Communications  
Advertising, Public Relations, & Applied Communications

Hannah Gaebel  
Ashland, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Agronomy

Natasya Ong  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Journalism & Mass Communications  
Broadcast Journalism
PRESTON PETERSON  
Broken Bow, NE  
Law  
Juris Doctorate

ANDREAgebhart  
Sioux Falls, SD  
Architecture  
Community & Regional Planning

AVERY SASS  
Firth, NE  
Journalism & Mass Communications  
Journalism

MICAELA RAHE  
Ceresco, NE  
Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication  
Agricultural Education - Leadership

SARAH WOLLENBURG  
Beatrice, NE  
Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication  
Agricultural Teacher Education

TONI RASMUSSEN  
Albion, NE  
Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication  
Agricultural Teacher Education

MORGAN ZUMPFE  
Friend, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Agricultural & Environmental Sciences Communication

ASHLEY RAY  
Sutton, NE  
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Agricultural Economics

MICAELA RAHE  
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Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication  
Agricultural Education - Leadership

Toni Rasmussen  
Albion, NE  
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Agricultural Teacher Education

AVERY SASS  
Firth, NE  
Journalism & Mass Communications  
Journalism

Andrea Gebhart  
Sioux Falls, SD  
Architecture  
Community & Regional Planning


APPENDIX III:
RURAL FUTURES INSTITUTE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT COLOR KEY

RFI COMPETITIVE AWARDS
Community participated in RFI Competitive Awards project at some level of engagement.

RFI Rural Regional Forums
Community hosted an RFI Rural Regional Forum in 2014 or 2016 and/or had a resident attend as a participant.

RFI FELLOW
Community of RFI Community Innovation Fellow.

RFI Student Serviceship
Community has hosted RFI Student Serviceship intern since 2013.

Connecting Young Nebraskans
Community has hosted a CYN summit or professional development workshop and/or has at least one resident who serves on the CYN steering team and/or has attended a CYN event.

The following list represents only geographic localities, but RFI will be expanding this list to represent its broader definition of “community” (page 2).

AINSWORD, NE ●
ALBION, NE ● ●
ALDA, NE ●
ALLIANCE, NE ● ● ●
AMES, IA ●
AMHERST, NE ● ●
ARCADIA, NE ●
ARNOLD, NE ● ●
ASHLAND, NE ● ●
ATKINSON, NE ●
AUBURN, NE ● ● ●
AURORA, NE ●
AUSTIN, TX ●
AXTELL, NE ●
AYR, NE ●
BANCROFT, NE ●
BASSETT, NE ●
BEATRICE, NE ● ●
BELLEVUE, NE ● ●
BENEDICT, NE ●
BENKELMAN, NE ●
BERTRAND, NE ●
BERWYN, NE • •
BINGHAM, NE •
BLAIR, NE • •
BLUE SPRINGS, NE •
BRADSHAW, NE •
BROCK, NE •
BROKEN BOW, NE • • • •
BROWNVILLE, NE • •
BRUNING, NE •
BRUNO, NE •
BURWELL, NE • •
BUSHNELL, NE •
BUTTE, NE •
CAMBRIDGE, NE • • •
CARROLL, IA •
CENTER, NE • •
CENTRAL CITY, NE •
CERESCO, NE •
CHADRON, NE • •
CHAPPELL, NE • •
CLARKSON, NE •
CLAY CENTER, NE •
CLEARWATER, KS •
CODY, NE •
COLUMBUS, NE • • •
CONCORD, NE •
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA •
COZAD, NE • • •
CRAWFORD, NE •
CREIGHTON, NE • •
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DAKOTA CITY, NE •
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ELM CREEK, NE • •
EUSTIS, NE •
EXETER, NE • •
FAIRFIELD, NE •
FAITH, ND •
FALLS CITY, NE • •
FIRTH, NE •
FORDYCE, NE •
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APPENDIX IV:
RURAL FUTURES INSTITUTE
COMPETITIVE AWARDS PARTNERS

BUSINESSES
Allied Health
Blue Cross Blue Shield
Cargill
DuPoint Pioneer
HyVee
Nebraska Enterprise Fund
Nemaha County Hospital
RMC Laboratory at Mazeno
Rocky Mountain Laboratories
Xpanxion Technologies, LLC

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
Buffalo Economic Development
Cherry County Economic Development
Health & Human Services
McCook Economic Development
Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
Nebraska Department of Education
Nebraska Department of Labor
Nebraska Energy Office
Nebraska Game & Parks
Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association
Nebraska Juvenile Services Division
Nebraska Public Power District
Nebraska State Bar Association
Nebraska Tourism Commission
Ogallala Economic Development
Public Health Department
South Central Economic Development
Urban Development Department
USDA Rural Development
Valley County Economic Development

ORGANIZATIONS
Art Farm
Asian Cultural and Community Center
Box Butte Development Center
Cedar Point Biological Station
Center for Great Plains Studies
Center for Leadership Development
Center for Public Affairs
Center for Research & Development
Center for Rural Affairs
Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
El Comite Latino
Everyday Democracy
Foster Grandparent Program
Great Plains Ecotourism Coalition
GROW Nebraska
Habitat for Humanity
Hartley Neighborhood Association
Heartland Center for Leadership Development
League of Nebraska Municipalities
Lied Center for Performing Arts
Main Street Beatrice
Midlands Mentoring Partnership
Midwest Theater
NamibRand Nature Reserve
Nebraska Alumni Association
Nebraska Art Teachers Association
Nebraska Association of County Officials
Nebraska Campus Compact
Nebraska Center For Applied Rural Innovation
Nebraska Community Foundation
Nebraskans for Civic Reform
Neighbor Works
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
North Platte Chamber of Commerce
North Platte Concert Association
Petrified Wood Art Museum
Phelps County Development Corporation
Platte Valley Literacy Association
RUPRI
Salina Art Center
Senior Corps of America
Sheldon Art Museum
Southern Heights Food Forest
The Aspen Institute
The St. Francis Hospital Foundation

UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

Central Community College
Chadron State College
Doane University
Duke University
Grand Canyon University
Iowa State University
Louisiana State University
Michigan State University
Mount Empire Community College
North Dakota State University
Peru State College
Purdue University
Sinte Gleska University
South Dakota State University
University of Colorado
University of Missouri
University of Montana
University of Virginia-Wise
Wayne State College
APPENDIX V:

RURAL FUTURES INSTITUTE
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

RFI’s strategic planning process included three Rural Regional Forums (West Point, North Platte and Chadron), two community visits (Seward and West Point), interviews with 26 key stakeholders, roundtable discussions in two rural communities (McCook and Ord), with the RFI Fellows and at the UNK campus. Input from each step of the process provided valuable insights into the short- and long-term priorities outlined in the RFI’s Strategic Plan.

RFI RURAL REGIONAL FORUMS

3 STATES
75 COMMUNITIES
478 ATTENDEES

107 PARTICIPANT COMMITMENTS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES
63 DEFINED ACTION STEPS FOR PARTICIPANTS TO IMPLEMENT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

In September 2016 the Rural Futures Institute co-hosted three Rural Regional Forums with local steering committees in West Point, Neb., North Platte, Neb., and Chadron, Neb. The forums included overviews of RFI-funded projects, tours of the communities that highlighted successes, a “community visioning” process for area youth, discussions with business, education and health care leaders and group work that aimed to address challenges in each region.

Each of the events served as an initial listening session for RFI prior to entering the strategic planning process in December 2016. Understanding the most critical challenges in the three regions of the state was crucial. Housing, business development, leadership transition and recruitment of residents and professionals topped the list at all three events.

RFI hosted an initial round of Rural Regional Forums in the fall of 2014 in the cities of Broken Bow, Nebraska City and Scottsbluff.
RFI STRATEGIC PLAN COMMUNITY VISITS

Two community visits were conducted in December 2016 to expose RFI’s strategic planning team to high-functioning, successful rural communities. The team toured Seward, Neb., and West Point, Neb., and met with key community leaders to better understand the challenges, organization and connections needed to drive progress in a rural community. The groups also discussed how the University of Nebraska has helped and can continue providing assistance as these communities work toward their desired futures.

SEWARD, NEBRASKA | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2016

Jason Berry
Co-Owner, Bottle Rocket Brewing Company

Col. Gerald “Jerry” Meyer
Historian, Nebraska National Guard Museum

Doug Brand
Vice President, Ag Lending, Jones National Bank & Trust Company; Board Member, Seward County Agricultural Society

Roger Reamer
Chief Executive Officer, Memorial Health Care Systems

Kurth Brashear
Vice President, Institutional Advancement & General Counsel, Concordia University

Jeanne Wiemer
Owner, Red Path Gallery & Tasting Room

Pat Colviron
Owner, Liberty House Bed & Breakfast, Antiques & Gifts

Johnathon Jank
President & CEO, Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership

Julia Marble
Owner & Instructor, Marble Music
WEST POINT, NEBRASKA | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

Kim Bearnes
Extension Educator, Northeast Research & Extension Center

Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong
Executive Director, West Point Chamber of Commerce

Erv Eisenmenger
Entrepreneur & Innovator, West Point Design/West Point Implement, Inc.

Ed Kaup
Ag Producer & Innovator, Ed Kaup Farms & Trucking

Mary Lauritzen
Former Owner, Family Vision Center; Commissioner, Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education; Theater Renovation Champion

Willis Mahannah
Editor, West Point News

Dave Wimmer
Former Business Owner, Wimmer’s Meat Products Inc.

Harry Knobbe
Entrepreneur & Owner, Harry Knobbe Feedyards & Knobbe Commodities

Chris Kreikemeier
Manager, West Point Nielsen Center

Brian Kreikemeier
Entrepreneur, Founder & President, B&B Video Productions, The Wedding Storytellers & Best Point Web Design
RFI STRATEGIC PLAN INTERVIEWEES

Strategic planning consultants Jay Azarow and Lawrence Patrick conducted 26 individual and pair interviews to garner constructive feedback about the work of the Rural Futures Institute and perspective on the Institute’s next steps. Interviewees included University of Nebraska faculty and administrators as well as partner institution faculty. Community leaders were also interviewed.

Greg Adams
Executive Director, Nebraska Community College Association

Sandra Barrera Fuentes
Assistant Extension Educator, Nebraska Extension, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Robert Bartee
Vice Chancellor for External Affairs, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Charles Bicak
Senior Vice Chancellor, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Mike Boehm
Vice President & Harlan Vice Chancellor, Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Hank Bounds
President, University of Nebraska

Lydia Brasch
Senator, District 16, Nebraska Legislature

Howard W. Buffet
Assistant Professor of Practice, College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Jim Cavaye
Professor & Program Director, Institute for Resilient Regions, University of Southern Queensland, Australia

Garry Clark
Manager of Nebraska Opportunity Fund, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority

Dele Davies
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Barry Dunn
President, South Dakota State University
Susan Fritz
Executive Vice President & Provost, University of Nebraska

Ronnie Green
Chancellor, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Kyle Ryan
Associate Professor, Creator and Co-Director, Children’s Health, Activity & Nutrition Community Engagement (CHANCE) Initiative, Peru State College

Spencer Hartman
Former Student Regent, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Susan Sheridan
Director, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families & Schools, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Chuck Hibberd
Dean, Nebraska Extension, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Ernie Weyeneth
President, Richard P. Kimmel & Laurine Kimmel Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Doug Kristensen
Chancellor, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Bob Whitehouse
Chairman, District 4, Board of Regents, University of Nebraska

Adam Morfeld
Senator, District 46, Nebraska Legislature

Amanda Witte
Project Manager, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families & Schools, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Bob Phares
Regent, District 7, University of Nebraska Board of Regents

Ron Yoder
Associate Vice Chancellor, Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Jim Pillen
Regent, District 3, University of Nebraska Board of Regents
RFI STRATEGIC PLAN ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Four facilitated roundtable discussions were conducted with University faculty and administrations as well as community leaders and residents to refine RFI’s mission statement and gather reactions, thoughts and suggestions on drafted goals.

RFI FELLOWS | THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017

Todd Bartee  
Professor, Kinesiology & Sports Sciences, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Robert Blair  
Professor, College of Public Administration, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Randy Cantrell  
Rural Sociologist, Rural Futures Institute, Nebraska Extension

Marty Fattig  
CEO, Nemaha County Hospital

Tom Field (special guest)  
Director, Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Melissa Garcia  
Community Affairs Manager, Black Hills Energy

Rachael Herpel  
Assistant Director, Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska

Greg Karst  
Executive Associate Dean, College of Allied Health Professions, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Greg Ptacek  
Director, Economic Development, City of Neligh

Reshell Ray  
Associate Director, Student Involvement, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Robert Stowell  
Lawyer & Owner, Stowell & Geweke, P.C., L.L.O.

Eric Thompson  
Associate Professor & Director, Bureau of Business Research, College of Business, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Milan Wall  
Co-Director, Heartland Center for Leadership Development

Kim Wilson  
Professor & Director, Landscape Architecture Program, College of Architecture, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Jeff Yost  
President & CEO, Nebraska Community Foundation
McCook, Nebraska | Monday, March 27, 2017

Andrew Ambriz, McCook
Director, McCook Economic Development Corp.

Cloyd Clark, McCook
Co-Chair, Buffalo Commons Storytelling Festival

Dale Dueland, McCook
Farmer & Board Member, McCook Community Foundation

Ben Dutton, McCook
Extension Educator, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Denise Garey, McCook
Health Educator, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

Ronda Graff, McCook
Coordinator, McCook Community Foundation Fund, YMCA & Gold Star Community Member

Jeff Gross, McCook
Principal, McCook High School

Karen Kliment-Thompson, McCook
Vice President, Ancillary Services, McCook Community Hospital

Lena Koebel, McCook
Business & Community Education Coordinator, Mid-Plains Community College

Ben Longnecker, McCook
Entrepreneur, Owner, Longnecker Jewelry

Jared Muehlenkamp, McCook
Owner, ACME Print and Design

Ashley Rice-Gerlach, McCook
Economic Development Consultant, Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Carol Schlegel, McCook
Tourism Director, McCook/Red Willow County Visitors Bureau

Craig Softley, Hayes Center
Entrepreneur, Economic Development Coordinator, Hayes County
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY | MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2017

Pete Kotsiopulos  
Senior Director of Development, University of Nebraska Foundation

Peter Longo  
Dean, College of Sciences, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Richard Mocarski  
Director of Sponsored Programs, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Tim Burkin  
Dean, College of Business & Technology, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Jane Ziebarth-Bovill  
Associate Professor, College of Education, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Jeremy Kroeger  
Student, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Dena Beck  
Business Consultant, Center for Rural Affairs

Lisa Tschauner  
Assistant Director, Center for Entrepreneurship & Rural Development

Ben Malczyk  
Assistant Professor, College of Natural & Social Sciences, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Louis Harper  
Student, University of Nebraska at Kearney
ORD, NEBRASKA | TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2017

Zeb Augustyn, Ord
Ag Loan Officer, First National Bank

Caleb Pollard, Ord
Co-Owner, Scratchtown Brewing Company

Ryan Broker, Ord
Nebraska State Outreach Director, U.S. Senator Ben Sasse

Crystal Ramm, Ord
Regional Coordinator, Central Community College, Ord Learning Center

Kristina Foth, Ord
Assistant Director, Valley County Economic Development, & Ord Area of Chamber Commerce

Robert Stowell, Ord
Lawyer & Owner, Stowell & Geweke, P.C., L.L.O.

Kristine Gale, Bassett
Development Coordinator, Nebraska Community Foundation

Josh Zangger, Kearney
General Manager, Sales & Research, Zangger Popcorn Hybrids

Dahn Hagge, Ord
Coordinator & Director, Golden Husk/Valley Performing Arts

Trevor Lee, Ord
Director, Valley Economic Development

Jason Moudry, Ord
Water Programs Specialist, Lower Loup Natural Resources District