

The Update

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association

SPRING 2014

Allen G. Blezek Friend of LEAD Award

Congratulations and thank you, Dr. Ron Hanson



Dr. Ron Hanson and wife of 45 years, Marilyn. Hanson was recently honored with the Allen G. Blezek Friend of LEAD Award.

Dr. Ron Hanson was recently honored with the Allen G. Blezek Friend of LEAD Award at the March graduation banquet held at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Hanson serves as the Neal E. Harlan Distinguished Professor of Agribusiness in the Department of Agricultural Economics at UNL. In addition to teaching more than 800 students in his classes each academic year, he serves as faculty academic adviser to 90 department majors for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR). He has been a member of the UNL Academy of Distinguished Teachers for the past eight years and has been recognized by the University Parents' Association 22 times for his contributions to UNL students, the most recognition for any UNL faculty member.

Hanson's college teaching and student advising career of 40 years has earned a total of 29 University honors and national awards. His most distinguished career honor was being named the Nebraska Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Higher Education in Washington, DC.

His most cherished honor was being named the University Educator of the Year by the Student Senate in 2008.

Hanson has dedicated his personal time and has counseled with Nebraska farm families for more than 35 years to help them resolve family conflicts in a more positive manner and to improve family relations through better communications. His latest efforts have been directed at the topic of farm business ownership, family succession and the transfer of management control to the next generation of family farming operations. Three decades ago, during the 1980's, when almost five times as many Nebraska banks failed as during the Great Depression, Hanson counseled, supported and advised a number of farm families that appeared at his office door who didn't know where else to turn.

Hanson has been part of the Nebraska LEAD Program since its fruition. He has been a presenter at every LEAD Class seminar, both September and March, except for only two times during a span of more than 32 years. His efforts have made a lasting impact on Nebraska LEAD Fellows as well as their families.

Hanson was raised on an Illinois family farm. He earned his undergraduate degree from Western Illinois University and received both his Masters and PhD graduate degrees from the University of Illinois. Before coming to UNL in 1974, he was an assistant professor in the Department of Ag Industries at Southern Illinois University for two years. Ron and his wife Marilyn have been married 45 years. They have two children and four grandchildren.

Thank you Dr. Ron Hanson for the commitment and wisdom you have shared with Nebraska neighbors everywhere. Your life has made a real, lasting difference for agriculture and families.



Outgoing President's Message



David Wendt, LEAD XXII

Wow! 2013 is gone and over with already. It is amazing how fast a year can go when we keep busy, isn't it? This year has been a busy year for all of us I'm sure. It is no different for me or our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Board. In addition to our quarterly board meetings, three other major items or events come to mind for 2013.

One of the items is the survey of existing alumni that took place. The survey was conducted with the hopes of giving us direction to help create our five-year strategic plan. Some of the things we learned were the most attended activities were the LEAD Alumni Annual Meeting, the former Nebraska Ag Classic, LEAD Graduation/honors night as well as the Ag Adventure Tour.

We learned the most important things we offer to the alumni is our newsletter to keep everyone up to date and informed and the Ag Adventure Tour. There is also a significant amount of interest in both the National and the International Travel Study tours organized by and for the alumni. We received good direction on locations for future travel studies. We also learned that of those responding, Nebraska LEAD Alumni seem

to be active not only in producer groups and organizations, but also as elected officials.

One of the major events of this past year for the alumni was our annual Ag Adventure Tour to southeast Nebraska. If you have never taken part in one of our tours I would highly encourage you to consider it. This is a wonderful educational opportunity to learn more about our state and the incredible things we have going on as well as an excellent opportunity to network.

We typically have about 50 people on our tours with about half or more coming from the Omaha or Lincoln area and the rest made up of LEAD Alumni. As I said, it is an opportunity for us to network, but more importantly it is an opportunity for us to educate ourselves and our metropolitan neighbors. For most of them this is their only real exposure to agriculture and rural communities outside of Omaha. Over the years we have dispelled many myths and opened eyes to the true story of agriculture and rural challenges and opportunities.

The last major item we addressed was the size of our alumni board. We decided classes over 25 years out are welcome to be a part of the board and provide input and leadership, but are no longer required to come up with a representative to the board. Most of these classes have served and been well represented over the years, but are now in different stages of their lives and careers and are willing to pass the reins on to more recent alumni classes.

Finally, I want to encourage all of us to continue to stay involved. We need to encourage our friends and neighbors to apply for the Nebraska LEAD program and encourage our LEAD classmates to join the alumni and show support for this organization. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you as your LEAD Alumni President in 2013. It has been an honor and a privilege to be a part of a group of leaders that is making a difference. Thank you and may God continue to bless you all in 2014 and beyond.



New President's Message

DOUBLE UP, DOUBLE DOWN . . . CHINA!



Mark Holoubek, LEAD VI

Hello everyone and congratulations to the class of LEAD XXX for their excellent work reinventing the LEAD Alumni Association Annual Conference in Kearney this past January. Bringing the conference back after an eight-year hiatus was a huge success. More than 110 individuals were registered at any given time. My challenge to LEAD Class 32 is to DOUBLE-UP the registration number for 2015 to 220!

I also want to take a moment to express our condolences to the family of Jeff Kraft and the entire LEAD Class XXX on their loss of Jeff the week of the event. The class did a wonderful job of recognizing Jeff's memory in a variety of ways. What a reminder of how important the LEAD family is to all of us.

One of the highlights of the event was the presentation by our former director, Dr. Allen Blezek. Dr. Blezek candidly talked about the early days of the program. He described the early challenges and his decision to become the director. Dr. Blezek called on the alumni to DOUBLE-DOWN on our personal financial contributions to the Nebraska LEAD program in 2014 as a way of giving back to the program. He finished with a discussion of the 12 lessons learned about leadership over the years at LEAD!

The annual business meeting noted that we currently have 520 Life memberships and 56 annual memberships. We reviewed a financial audit of the records and passed a budget including a \$5,000 donation to the LEAD program for 2014. The board approved funding for the printing of an updated alumni directory and reached back some 28 years in selecting a LEAD Class VI member to be president in 2014 and I am honored to assume the role of president in light of Dr. Blezek's comments about our rich history.

Having survived the ag crisis, I currently farm and also assist a Fremont, Nebraska-based independent seed company to expand market share. In addition to me taking over as president, Nancy Eberle also announced that she intends to exit her current duties as Executive Secretary in one year at the January 2015 annual conference. Let me be the first to say "Thank You" to Nancy for making such a difference for the LEAD Alumni Association.

We also very recently completed the graduation ceremony of LEAD Class XXXII on March 14. Congratulations and best wishes to them as they enter the next phase of the LEAD experience and become more involved in leadership roles in their community and the state. It was truly a privilege for my wife Willow (LEAD XXVI) and I to present the "Allen G. Blezek 2014 Friend of LEAD Award" to our long time friend, Dr. Ron Hanson.

The business meeting prior to the graduation ceremony on March 14 found the board welcoming a new LEAD II board member, Steve Henry. We reviewed financial investments and reinvested the money from a corporate bond that had been called since our last meeting. Kerry Hoffschneider notified the board that recent changes in her employment and life commitments would cause her to resign as our editor with the March issue of the newsletter after almost 9 years of service to LEAD Alumni. Kerry has done an awesome job for the Lead

New President's Message

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Alumni Association and we will miss her touch in the newsletter. Let me be the first to say "Thank You" to Kerry for making such a difference for the LEAD Alumni Association.

Nancy Eberle announced that the Ag Tour will be a reverse tour to Omaha with one overnight venue. Even bigger news was her announcement that the LEAD Alumni International Study Tour destination will be to China and Hong Kong in March of 2015! Nancy is well underway in assimilating the agenda and cooperators for the tour. She expects further announcements in June and requests for deposits at the September meeting. If anyone can provide ideas of assistance, please call Nancy!

See you in this summer's newsletter and have a wonderful start to spring!

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## Eberle and Hoffschneider to hand over the reins!

*Volunteers needed for opportunities to give back to alumni association . . .*

Nancy Eberle – Executive Secretary of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association and Kerry Hoffschneider – Newsletter Editor for the association have announced their resignation from their duties. Nancy will be handing over the role in January of 2015 after 20 years of service. Kerry has been serving for nearly nine years and would like to pass the reins over this summer in time for the June printing of "Update."

Please contact these ladies if you would like to offer your expertise.

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Kerry Hoffschneider  
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Save the Date!

Exciting, Fun, Eye-Opening, Friend-Building – Ag Adventure Tour

July 11-12, 2014

**Leading this year's tour is Lynda Shafer and Leadership Omaha Alumni
... Stay tuned for the fun!**

Nancy's Notes



Nancy Eberle

Happy spring!

Seems like it has been a long time coming this winter, but indications are that spring is here and might actually stay! For those of you who were at the annual conference in January, it was great to see you. LEAD 30 did an awesome job putting the conference together – great content, great food, great networking – all in all a GREAT two days. Thanks so much to co-chairs Phil Ramsel and Deb Neidig and Marv Reichert, who is the LEAD 30 representative on our board of directors. Also, thank you all of the class members who worked so diligently to make sure that everyone had a wonderful experience. I'm anxious to hear what LEAD 31 has in the plans for us for our conference this next year.

In this newsletter you will see that we presented the Allen G. Blezek Friend of LEAD award to Dr. Ron Hanson from the University of Nebraska. This was presented at the annual dinner and graduation event for LEAD Class 32. What a wonderful night. Congrats again to LEAD Class 32 on your completion of the program and hopefully on your joining the ranks of the other alumni in our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association.

You may have already heard that I plan to step down as the Executive Secretary of the Association after the next annual meeting which will probably be held sometime in January of 2015. I have truly enjoyed my time of service on the board of directors and as executive secretary of the association. I am in my twentieth year and can honestly say the time has flown by. There is no better organization than this one made up of graduates of the Nebraska LEAD program.

The board will be actively looking for my replacement this summer/fall. We plan to have a strategic planning meeting sometime in June to come up with a list of goals and a job description around this position going forward. If you would like to talk about the position, feel free to contact me at any time. We are looking at doing some restructuring that would include new job descriptions for the executive secretary position, the newsletter editor and the executive treasurer – should be fun.

In the meantime, mark your calendars to attend the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association Ag Adventure Tour – Save the Date of July 11-12. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to network with each other and with our urban neighbors. This tour will take place in the Omaha area of the state. Our hosts will be the Leadership Omaha Alumni. I know they will plan a great tour for us this year – I'm looking forward to it already.

That's it for now.

Until next time . . . **LEAD ON!**

Getting to know Eugene Goering



Eugene Goering, LEAD XXVII

What LEAD class were you in and what led you to apply for the Nebraska LEAD Program?

I was in LEAD XXVII (27). I had applied for LEAD in one of the early classes, but was not selected. I was busy with family and farming and applied again 20 some years later. I think it was good for me and our class to have a variety of ages in the class.

Describe your agricultural operation or agribusiness career.

I farm with my sons. I started with my father and now have come full circle. We raise seed corn for two companies and provide services to the seed companies. We also grow soybeans and some commercial corn. We have raised dairy alfalfa, wheat and sorghum. Cover crops after the seed is a new practice we are working on. Working with generations on a family farm is very rewarding to me.

Talk about your family.

I am in my mid 50's and my family is evolving. I was suddenly widowed 3 years ago and newly married in Nov. I have 4 children and now 2 adult children from Sheila. My 2 sons farm with me, one married with grandson, my oldest daughter is married in CA with my 2 grandkids, my younger daughter is engaged and going to UNMC. Sheila's are in graduate school in Boulder & Iowa City.

Please include any local, state or national involvements you would like to mention.

I am involved in organization locally on church council, 12 years on school board, LEAD Alumni board, and recently elected to the state Soybean Board. I am a member in corn & soybean associations.

What moment/moments stand out from your LEAD journey the most?

The entire LEAD journey was great. The friendships are important. The seminar at Creighton where a LEAD fellow told of his health problems tied into my future in many ways. My LEAD journey is still in motion. The alumni is a conduit to grow, pay forward and back with time energy and resources.

2014 Nebraska Outstanding LEAD Alumni Award

Congratulations Lisa Lunz of LEAD 17



Lisa Lunz, LEAD 17

The Outstanding LEAD Alumni Award was first presented in 1991. Every year since then the association has recognized a member who has achieved notable success in using the skills learned through the LEAD program and through other means to become a leader in their chosen field of agriculture with this honor.

The 2014 recipient of the Outstanding LEAD Alumni Award is Lisa Lunz who was honored at the January LEAD Alumni Conference. Lisa is a LEAD 17 fellow and a Lifetime Member of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association.

A farm north of Wakefield is home to Lisa, and her husband Jim. They have raised two daughters, Kristina and Keri. The Lunz's farming operation consists of a dryland, no-till corn and soybean rotation. They have been no-tilling for the past twenty years. Lunz grew up on a diversified farm south of Wakefield and graduated from the University of Nebraska with an Animal Science degree.

Lunz participates in a number of organizations. She has been a member of the Nebraska Soybean Board for the past twelve years, serving as chair for two years. She has served on the board of directors for the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance for the past three years. She is also a member of the Wakefield Community School Board and currently serves as president.

Lunz was a graduate of LEAD XVII (17) and is currently a member of the LEAD Alumni Association. She belongs to the American Soybean Association, Nebraska Soybean Association, National Corn Growers and the Nebraska Corn Growers Association and Nebraska Farm Bureau. Lisa is currently serving on the Farm Bureau Ag Promotion Committee. She is also a member of Salem Lutheran Church and has served on church council and several committees.

Below are some thoughts by nominators . . .

"Lisa's knowledge of farming and the challenges of obtaining useful knowledge to make production decisions, combined with what she knows about the research process has made her an invaluable asset to the Nebraska Soybean Board," said Charles Shapiro – soil scientist at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. "Lisa recognizes the need for solid research on both immediate needs, and future possibilities. She has been a calm voice in discussions, and always has the 'big' picture in her mind as she works through issues."

"Lisa is an active farm wife and mother. Because of her interest in agriculture she served on the Soybean board in Nebraska and has had a national role as well. She represented the Soybean Association on trips to China and Japan," said Sandy Preston – Dixon County extension educator. "She also shares her knowledge locally through a variety of organizations. I have worked with her in a presentation about soybeans through a teacher program held at the Haskell Ag Lab near Concord. Through these presentations she was able to share with the teachers the inter relationship between Nebraska Agriculture and the world."

"I first met Lisa Lunz back in the early 1980's when we were both students at UNL working on careers in

agriculture,” said Mark Bejot – superintendent of Wakefield Community School. “I became reacquainted with Lisa when I took the job as Superintendent of Schools at Wakefield Community School where she served as the board secretary and currently president of the board. I quickly learned that Lisa was very busy and actively involved with the Nebraska Soybean Board, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Salem Lutheran Church, Band Boosters and Wakefield Athletic Boosters just to name a few.”

“Not only do these civic activities keep her busy, so does being a mother of three children, farm wife and combine operator with her husband Jim,” Bejot added. “Lisa continues to champion the cause of teaching everyone she can about the role of agriculture in their lives. She has taught agriculture in the classroom activities to children as well as soybean experiments in elementary science. When I think of the purpose of the LEAD program to develop confident progressive agricultural leaders within the Nebraska industry, I believe Lisa has truly fulfilled the LEAD mission.”

Congratulations Lisa – you are so deserving of this honor and such an example to emulate when it comes to leadership.

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## **Nebraska LEAD Alumni International Study Travel Tour**

### **China – Shanghai – Beijing**

### **Proposed dates: March 10-18, 2015**

#### **TENTATIVE ITINERARY:**

**March 10** – Depart Omaha

**March 11** – Arrive Beijing, Group transfer to Park Plaza Beijing Wangfujing

**March 12/13** – Sightseeing tours to Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City and Great Wall at Badaling. Welcome Peking duck dinner and a potential visit with agricultural officials in Beijing to get an overview of agriculture in China.

**March 14** – Morning technical visit to Pengcheng Food Processing Factory located in Shunyi County includes; exhibition hall, raw meat processing department, cooked food processing department, product showroom and on-site tour. Tentative meeting with U.S. commodity group officials.

**March 15** – Morning visit to Temple of Heaven including Tai Chi exercise with local people (weather-permitting). Afternoon transfer to airport for flight to Shanghai, Transfer to Le Royal Meridien.

**March 16** – Sightseeing tour visiting the Bund, Yu Yuan Garden, Old Town and technical visit to Sunqiao Modern Agricultural Zone in Sunqiao County includes exhibition hall, Netherland Greenhouse and Domestic Greenhouse (inside tour prohibited), Hydroponics Planting Section, Desert House, Lucid Ganoderma House, Melon and Fruits House.

**March 17** – Excursion to Zhujiajiao Water Town includes; 30-minute boat ride on the tributary of Ancient Grand Canal and then return to Shanghai city to visit the Silk Museum and Tianzifang District. This will be followed by a farewell Dim Sum dinner.

**March 18** – Group transfer to airport



# Managing in this Golden Age of Agriculture

By Phil Ramsel – LEAD 30

The 2014 Nebraska LEAD Annual Conference was held January 17-18, 2014 at the Younes Center in Kearney, NE. LEAD I was honored during the conference with a presentation by David Wendt and LEAD I memories from Don Hutchins. David Wendt's presentation included a recollection of the uncertainty around the agriculture economy when the LEAD program was launched. The LEAD I members have demonstrated a faith in our program and have paid forward through their leadership.

Managing: In this Golden Age of Agriculture was the title of the conference and themes were centered on real estate, marketing and water. The recent economy in production agriculture has exceeded the thoughts of many and with that success, challenges have increased as well. Real estate prices and valuations have increased substantially over the past decade. Increases in commodity demand, a better world market and higher sensitivity to supply/demand have increased price volatility making marketing even more critical to operation success. Water in Nebraska is our most precious natural resource. Competition for water, water management and conservation is as important now as it ever has been.

Ben Lans and Mark Johnson from Cargill AgHorizons Marketing Services shared the current condition of commodity markets, insight into managing in volatile markets and how a service such as CAMS fits into an operation to manage production marketing. Dr. Brad Lubben from the University of Nebraska talked about current agricultural policy around the farm bill and projections for floor pricing ahead with a projected farm bill policy. Bill Davis, Chief Credit Officer – Farm Credit Services of America, presented on farm real estate values and Farm Credit Services of America models on sustainable levels for real estate values.

Joe Richeson – LEAD 31 had a presentation on the LEAD 31 International Seminar to Hong Kong, Vietnam and Taiwan. Dean Edson, Jasper Fanning and Stan Staab headlined a panel of Natural Resource District (NRD) leaders from different areas of the state. They shared with us the formation of NRD districts, the different challenges that the NRD faces throughout the state from drought to flooding and public policy challenges facing water policy as we look into the future. State Senator Tom Carlson shared his leadership direction from the Water Funding Taskforce. Sen. Carlson shared his thoughts on needing two more reservoirs in this state, each the size of Lake McConaughy. He also stressed a need to be more efficient with the water in the state and that having more surface storage is critical to managing to higher efficiencies and to managing flooding in northeast and eastern Nebraska.

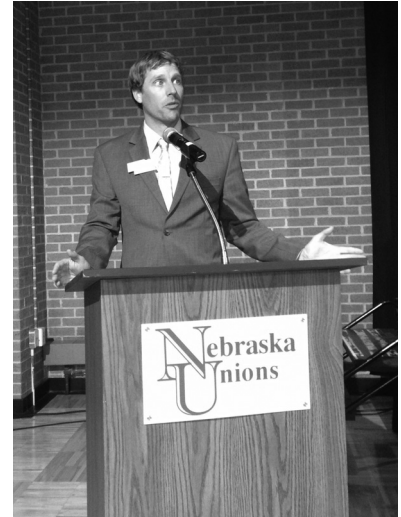
The last two speakers were Dr. Allen Blezek and Dr. Ronnie Green from the University of Nebraska. Dr. Blezek shared "Things I have learned about leadership over the past half century."

Dr. Green presented his vision for agriculture in the future – indicating that agriculture will be a more popular destination of students and needs to continue to grow to sustain the needs of our growing world. Dr. Blezek and Dr. Green gave the LEAD Alumni a renewed call to leadership stressing that our industry needs continued leadership in an environment where a majority of the population isn't from agricultural roots and may have a large misunderstanding of agriculture.

LEAD 30 and the LEAD program was faced with the tragic loss of one of our alumni before the conference. Jeff Kraft – LEAD 30 passed away during the week before the conference, a victim of a car accident. In the months leading up to the conference, we also lost Ron Bishop, a NRD leader, who was slated to be one of our speakers. Ron was a leader in the NRD and instrumental in moving from small water projects to NRD regions.

The members of LEAD 30 were able to do a good job of fundraising for the conference. We were able to finance the entire cost of the event and pay forward to the LEAD Alumni Association and the LEAD program. We would like to thank all of our sponsors, speakers and alumni for helping make the conference a success.

# Nebraska LEAD Program Recognition Banquet



*Matt Boos, Bonnie Downing and Brian James of LEAD 32 were chosen to speak about their LEAD experience during the NALC Annual Meeting and Nebraska LEAD Program Recognition banquet. Highlights of their time in LEAD included visiting the concentration camps in Europe, laying a Nebraska wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, standing at Gettysburg, learning about the diversity of agriculture across Nebraska and making lifetime friendships with class members.*



*Chuck Schroeder – Founding Executive Director of the University of Nebraska Rural Futures Institute was the guest speaker during the banquet. Chuck talked about “making hope happen” through the institute and leadership. He inspired the 900 LEAD graduates to go out and use their experiences to lead and revitalize rural Nebraska.*



*Members of Nebraska LEAD Class II were honored during the Nebraska LEAD Program Recognition banquet as well. The class was thanked for their early involvement with LEAD and were honored for their years of service within agriculture.*





*Water Panel (from left to right): Dean Edison - Executive Director, Nebraska Association of NRDs, Jasper Fanning - General Manager, Upper Republican NRD, and Stan Staab - General Manager, Lower Elkhorn NRD.*



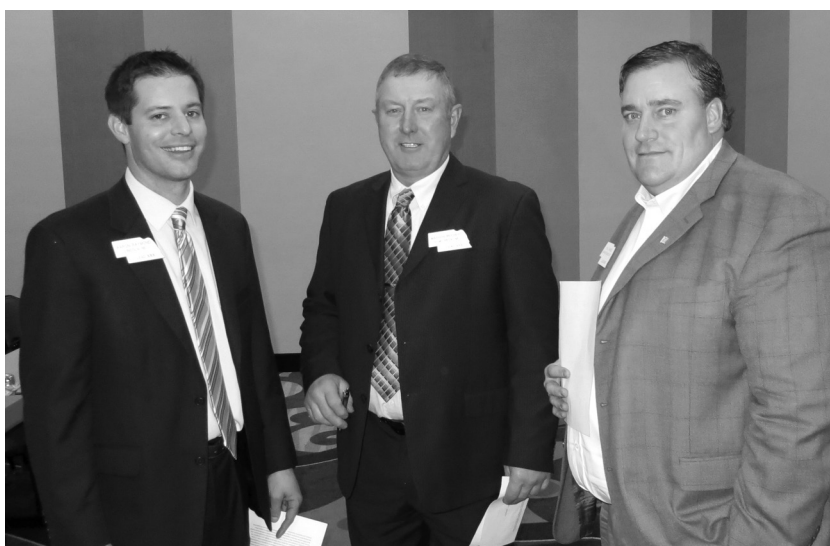
*Dr. Blezek addressing the group.*



*New officer team (from left to right): Doug Saathoff - Treasurer, Mark Holoubek - President, Marv Reichert - Vice President, Anita Keys - Secretary.*



*Outgoing LEAD Alumni President, David Wendt and LEAD Alumni Executive Secretary, Nancy Eberle at the LEAD Alumni Conference. We thank both of these individuals for their great service to the association.*



*LEAD XXX Alums were responsible for the Annual Conference. Here are three of them: Aaron Raymond, Marv Reichert, and Phil Ramsel.*

# The Update

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## Nebraska LEAD Program Class I Honored

*Annual LEAD alumni conference perfect place to honor flagship class*



Pictured back row from left to right LEAD I class members who were honored at the January LEAD Conference; Gerald Muller, Dick Helms, Gary Kubicek, Ron Bauer, John Burkholder, David Anderson, Jim Gocke and Ken Anderson. Front row from left are: Gerald Clausen, Dave Burkholder, Don Hutchens, Allen Sedivy and Wade Nutzman.

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Check out our website at <http://leadalumni.unl.edu/>

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Please remember to submit important  
Nebraska LEAD Alumni news to:

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### NETWORK!

Keep the spirit of the  
Nebraska LEAD  
Program ALIVE!

## Update

Update is the official newsletter of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association. The purpose of the publication is to keep you, a vital part of the LEAD network, linked with fellow alumni!