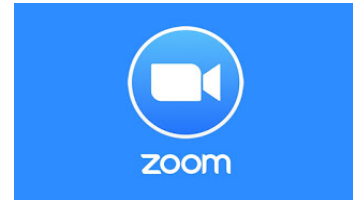


The Update

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association

WINTER 2020

WE WANT YOU ON



Nebraska LEAD Alumni Annual Meeting and Conference

January 23, 2021 2pm-5pm

Zoom Instructions will be mailed to you prior to the meeting.

This year's meeting will be held via ZOOM. A notice and listing of our speakers will be mailed out prior, but we want you to add this to your calendar!

Legacy: Remembering Our Past – Looking to the Future

Events for the Zoom meeting will include items such as:

“Everyone has a Story”

“Tribute to Dr. Allen Blezek”

“The LEAD program – changes for the future”

“The Political scene – what will it look like?”

“2021 Outstanding Alum presentation”

“Covid survival Guide to International Mixology”

. . . . and more Plan to join us!



Nebraska

LEAD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

www.leadalumni.unl.edu

AGENDA

LEAD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING January 23, 2021 Via Zoom Conference Call

Call Meeting to Order -- Declare quorum – Matt Dolch

Introductions -- 2020 Board of Directors & staff – Matt Dolch

Announce 2021 Executive Officers – Matt Dolch

Read Minutes from January 2020 annual meeting -- Motion needed – Nancy

Treasurer's Report for 2020 -- Motion Needed to Approve - Pending annual audit – Tim Graff

Investment Report for 2020 – Tim Graff

Budget Proposal for 2021 - Motion needed - Tim Graff

Annual address by President Dolch

Message from Nebraska LEAD program Executive Director Terry Hejny

Outstanding Alum for 2021 – Matt Dolch

Any Business from Lead Alumni??

Thank you for Service to Board-Outgoing Members – Matt Dolch

Adjourn



Craig Buescher, LEAD V

Dear Fellow LEAD Alums,

On July 6th we lost a remarkable man that has touched the lives of students, LEAD Alumni, and colleagues since the 1960's. He was an extraordinary mentor and friend to many of us and we want to do something to honor him.

The LEAD Alumni Association along with the Nebraska LEAD Program, the University of Nebraska Foundation and with the support of Allen's wife Kay, have all teamed up to set up an endowed Fellowship fund which is named the Allen G. Blezek Memorial LEAD Fellowship fund. We are hoping to raise \$100,000 to fully endow a fellowship and after it is invested, the interest will help fund a LEAD fellow each year forever into the future.

Many of you probably have received a letter in the mail explaining how you can donate to this fund or add to your donation that you might have made as a memorial after Allen passed away in July. But if you have not had a chance to donate and have not received a way to do it, please consider this invitation to do so. Just contact me or Nancy and we will be able to help you. Realize that you can pledge an amount for this year and next year to further help us reach our goal.

Please remember that if you are in production agriculture you can donate grain which will help you on your tax liability. If you would like to donate grain, please contact Nancy and she will put you in contact with someone that can help you.

Thank you in advance for helping to reach our goal to endow this Fellowship to honor Allen. It seems it is the least we can do to thank him for his dedication to the Nebraska LEAD Program.

Sincerely,
Craig Buescher LEAD V 402-469-8390



Blezek Memory Book

We are attempting to put together a "memory book" of Dr. Blezek which can be presented to Kay Blezek once completed. I am "collecting" those articles and pictures and will create the book once we have items in place. I hope you will add your thoughts or memories to this effort. You can include up to three pictures and your printed article. Please remember to include your name and LEAD class number.

We all have memories of the time Dr. "B" spent with us. Let's save those memories and share them with Kay. You can send your items to me via email or snail mail. Thanks for taking some time to do this! I'd like your items no later than December 15! Call me or email if you have any questions☺

Nancy Eberle, Executive Secretary
neberle@mainstaycomm.net
(402) 366-8001
520 Road 20, Bradshaw NE 68319

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**~ CLASS NOTES ~**

Deb VanMatre (LEAD XXIV) was re-elected to her third term as Mayor of the City of Gibbon in November. She began her term as President-Elect on the board of the Nebraska League of Municipalities in October, serves on the board of the League Association of Risk Management, and is a Director and Secretary on the Central Platte Natural Resource District board.



## President's Message



*Matt Dolch, LEAD XXXIII.*

### **AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP: VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON** Greetings, Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association!

It has certainly been a busy year for each of us; in a new and different way. New schedules, new routines, and a new “normal” has carved a deep path through the 2020 calendar year. I certainly have missed our annual gathering at the Nebraska State Fair for our LEAD Reception and Husker football and volleyball fellowship in Lincoln on gamedays. As we reflect on 2020 and prepare for 2021, I am reminded of the importance in maintaining our identity as authentic people and leaders in all scenarios.

Since 1981, the Nebraska LEAD Program has worked to prepare and motivate men and women in agriculture for more effective leadership. 2020 has provided each of us with the opportunity to employ our leadership skills, investigating and listening to all sides of an issue before formulating our opinions.

For those involved in production agriculture, our harvest season was completed in near-record time across the state, well ahead of the five-year average. The fall season has been “open” to date, allowing many of us to apply fall fertilizer and complete other field work. From a commodity standpoint, global crop supply fears have launched soybeans to their highest position in six years and boosted initial estimates of soybean acres for 2021. Regardless of commodity we thank each farmer for providing food on our tables, especially during a global pandemic. You are appreciated.

For those supporting agriculture and business through an office setting, “Zoom” is the new normal. Zoom isn’t just referencing a quick trip to Lincoln for the weekend from the panhandle, but the daily virtual meeting routine. Ensuring you know where the mute, audio, and video buttons are located are critical for Zoom call success. As virtual leaders our leadership skills and abilities are stretched in different ways. Are we utilizing the correct medium to connect with our audience? Is our message clear and concise? Are we acknowledging individuals on the call and encouraging feedback? These are just a few of the questions we can ask in support of a positive and productive virtual meeting experience. Whether you are hosting an in-person meeting or utilizing a virtual platform I encourage each of us to maintain authentic leadership. Authentic leaders find a way to maintain positivity while employing self-awareness and a brand of being genuine. They are mission driven and they always focus on the long-term road ahead. Let’s look to build a successful 2021 through leading by example, just as an authentic leader would.

If you haven’t taken the opportunity to secure your annual Nebraska LEAD Alumni membership, please take the opportunity to do so. Your membership dues are vital to delivering our newsletter, programing, and status as an active alumni organization. We do have an online membership option which can be found under the Membership and Dues tab at [www.neleadalumni.com](http://www.neleadalumni.com). Thank you in advance for your support through annual or lifetime membership participation.

Thank you to our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Board representatives for the continued engagement in this virtual world, as well as our Executive Secretary Nancy Eberle (LEAD XII) and our Executive Treasurer Tim Graff (LEAD XX). Mark Suhr (LEAD 33) manages our social media outreach through platforms like Facebook. It is a privilege to work alongside these individuals as we continue to foster new ideas to engage and connect with Nebraska LEAD Alumni membership.

We look forward to you attending our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Annual Conference on January 23rd. Don’t worry about traveling, as we will be providing this as a virtual option this year. We are excited about the presenter line-up and the opportunity to deliver the LEAD message through a new format.

Finally, thank you for being an authentic leader in today’s world. Stay safe!

*The most important step any Nebraska LEAD Fellow graduate can take is to stay connected to this amazing network of agricultural leaders from across Nebraska. Continue the personal and professional growth that you began by staying in touch with your classmates and those of the other 37 classes to enhance your "LEAD Experience" by becoming a life member or renewing your Nebraska LEAD Alumni Membership today. Dennis Nun (LEAD 4)*

It's time to think about your 2021 membership to the NE LEAD Alumni Association. Below is a form for you to use and return. Join the 680+ members now!

**THE NEBRASKA LEAD ALUMNI 2021 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

*Join the LEAD Network with your Membership*

*\$45 Annual Membership*

*\$450 Lifetime Membership*

Some Benefits of Membership:

- . . . . Membership Directory – Printed every 3 years
- . . . . Quarterly Newsletter
- . . . . Provides Financial Support to LEAD program
- . . . . Special Leadership Programs
- . . . . Educational Travel Seminars - national, international and Ag tour
- . . . . A link with “Leaders” all across the U.S.

And much more!

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**Yes, I'll join the LEAD network -- Enclosed are my dues for 2021**

**Annual Dues \$45**    **Lifetime Dues \$450**   **LEAD Class #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Spouse** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone No.** \_\_\_\_\_ **Work or Business No.** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

We have an electronic payment system on the website. If you'd like to send your membership dues electronically, go to: <http://www.neleadalumni.com/> and complete the information there, or snail mail by December 31 to: Nancy Eberle, Executive Secretary, 520 Road 20, Bradshaw, NE 68319

# Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association

## OUTSTANDING LEAD ALUMNI AWARD

Each of you are aware of someone deserving of this award. We hope you will take a few minutes to write a paragraph or two about the reason the nominee is a great candidate to consider. Previous award winners are listed below.

### Award Purpose:

To provide public recognition of a Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association member who has achieved notable success in using the skills learned through the Nebraska LEAD Program and through other means to become a leader in their chosen field of agriculture.

### Award Nomination Criteria:

1. Nominee MUST BE a current paid member of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association.
2. Nominee has demonstrated leadership qualities deserving of the Outstanding LEAD Alumni Award.

Deadline for nomination documents: **January 5, 2021**

Nomination documents must be mailed or e-mailed to:

**Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association**  
c/o Nancy Eberle, Executive Secretary  
520 Road 20  
Bradshaw, NE 68319  
[neberle@mainstaycomm.net](mailto:neberle@mainstaycomm.net)

Or E-mailed to:  
[matt.dolch@syngenta.com](mailto:matt.dolch@syngenta.com)

3. Nominations (not including past winners) from the previous two years will be included in the current year's selection process.
4. Notification of selection committee results to the nominator will be made one week after nomination deadline.

### Award Recipient Information:

1. The Outstanding LEAD Alumni Award will be presented virtually during the Annual LEAD Alumni Meeting. The award will also be presented in person at the 2022 annual conference.
2. The Outstanding LEAD Alumni Award recipient will receive public recognition and a plaque sponsored by the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association.

### Award Winners:

1991 – Don Hutchens  
1992 – Larry Hudkins  
1993 – Dennis Baack  
1994 – Larry Sitzman  
1995 – Gary Bergman  
1996 – Ceclia Grevson  
1997 – Mike Bauerle  
1998 – Kate Sullivan  
1999 – Mary Pat-Finn Hoag  
2018 – J.D. Alexander

2000 – Tom Baker  
2001 – Gerald Schmidt  
2002 – Craig Buescher  
2003 – Doug Boisen  
2004 – John Miller  
2005 – Fred Meyer  
2006 – Nancy Eberle  
2007 – Robert Rikli  
2008 – Mark Jagels  
2019 – Fred Bruning

2009 – Jerry Stahr  
2010 – Steve Kruger  
2011 – Todd Schroeder  
2012 – Deb Fischer  
2013 – Dan Duncan  
2014 – Lisa Lunz  
2015 – Dennis Kahl  
2016 – Willow Holoubek  
2017 – Tom Schwarz  
2020 – Gerald Clausen

# Board Showcase – David Wendt (LEAD XXII)



David Wendt, LEAD XXII

There were several LEAD Alumni over the years that encouraged me to apply. I had wanted to for quite a while before I actually did, I just had to wait for the timing to be right for me.

I grew up on a family farming operation in NE Nebraska, outside of Leigh. My brother and nephews have taken over our family farm. I go back and help them on weekends at times and during harvest, which I always enjoy. I have worked in the Ag Finance arena for the past 28 years, most of that time on the lending side and most recently with crop insurance as well. I have been with Farm Credit Services of America for 15 years now. My wife Keri and I will be married four years at the end of July and we have no kids. Keri is a nurse on the cardiac surgery team at Nebraska Medicine in Omaha. We currently live in Council Bluffs, IA.

I was a part of LEAD XXII. There were so many great experiences and friendships from LEAD and LEAD Alumni. Probably the most memorable though would be our International Study Travel to Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. Very interesting to experience and learn about agriculture in other countries, from what they produce, to their markets to their government support or lack thereof.

I highly encourage anyone considering Nebraska LEAD to apply. It will likely be one of the greatest learning and networking experiences of your life.

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## Nancy's Notes



Nancy Eberle, Executive Secretary

The year 2020 is coming to a close – frankly, I won't miss it. This has been the strangest year ever and unfortunately has not allowed us to do most of the events we have in the past. My sincere hope is that the COVID shots will be ready for general use soon and we can "move on"!

In this newsletter we have included the nomination information for our 2021 Outstanding Alum. Nominating someone is an easy process. I hope you will take some time once you receive this newsletter to send us a name of someone deserving of this award. Our plan is to announce the winner during our virtual annual meeting and conference. We will follow up with an in-person presentation at the 2022 annual conference. The list of former winners is included in the nomination form – help us find another name to add!

As of today, we are planning to have the 2021 Ag Adventure Tour and also reinstate the international travel plans that were postponed this year. Once we get the "all clear" it will be great to get us traveling again. Join us on these events.

We hope you have all remained safe and healthy and maybe have enjoyed a little extra time with your families. Take care – stay safe.

Until next time . . . . . LEAD on!

# The Update

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association  
Nancy Eberle  
520 Road 20  
Bradshaw, NE 68319  
neberle@mainstaycomm.net

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Check out our website at <http://www.neleadalumni.com>

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*Please remember to submit important  
Nebraska LEAD Alumni news to:*

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association  
Nancy Eberle  
520 Road 20  
Bradshaw, NE 68319  
neberle@mainstaycomm.net

## 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!