

STORM RECOVERY RESOURCES

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County has compiled a wide variety of storm-related resources online at lanaster.unl.edu. There are links to other University of Nebraska resources, local government Web sites, local agencies and national resources. A special section for youth include safety games, safety checklists and other fun activities.

Deadline for Federal Assistance July 24

Renters, homeowners and businesses who were affected by the recent storms are eligible to register for state and federal disaster relief programs through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Call 1-800-621-3362 to register for disaster assistance. The service is available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. The deadline to register is July 24, 2004.

Long-Term Recovery Organization Addresses Unmet Needs

Some Nebraska citizens affected by the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding that began in Nebraska on May 20, will not meet the eligibility criteria of government disaster aid programs or will have serious disaster-caused unmet needs even after receiving help from these programs. For these people, assistance may come from a committee of church, non-profit agency and state and local agency representatives who work on problems ranging from home repair to counseling.

The Nebraska Disaster Recovery Organization (NDRO) has been created to help the people who have continuing unmet needs after receiving assistance from all available resources. The committee will determine ways to organize and deliver assistance without duplicating what other agencies can provide or have provided. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County is part of this committee.

Services offered may include financial assistance, clean-up, minor and major home repair, crisis and spiritual counseling.

For more information, contact the Rural Response Hotline at 1-800-464-0258 or go to www.nebraskadisasterrecovery.org.

Pollution Prevention Reaches Producers

Amanda Koelling
UNL Partners in Pollution
Prevention Intern

UNL's Partners in Pollution Prevention (P3) program, from the departments of Civil Engineering and Biological Systems Engineering, is in its eighth year. During the 12-week program interns from various parts of the Midwest come to UNL to receive instruction on pollution prevention (P2) and then are sent to various communities and businesses within Nebraska.

In the past, interns have assisted more than 229 businesses both small and large, from auto body shops to printing companies and more. This year a team of four interns will be helping out another kind of business. The team of Amy Good (Oakly, KS), Dayne Moreton (Fayetteville, AR), Kindra Orbin (Lincoln, NE) and Amanda Koelling (Columbia, MO) will assist Nebraska producers with whole farm nutrient balances.

The team will be taking inventory at local livestock and poultry farms to determine the amount of nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) entering and leaving the farm. Nutrient imbalance is a very important issue in Nebraska. Excess nutrients, caused by over application of nutrients can be a problem by increasing production costs. Also, fields with excess nutrients can be damaging to Nebraska's waters.

The teams' goal is to visit local producers and complete the nutrient balance based on

information collected from the producers. The nutrient balance is a nutrient scorecard or yardstick for how well a producer is doing at managing and utilizing nutrients on the farm. The team will then use the information to rate or gauge how the producers are doing, suggest ways to reduce any imbalances present and provide them with necessary information to make good decisions to help lessen their impact on the environment and maintain sustainability. If found, imbalances can be corrected by altering fertilizer applications, animal diets, land stewardship and a variety of other ways. Hopefully, the producers will use the recommendations to improve their operations and maximize fertilizer and feed inputs.

The team will, at a producer's request, evaluate two individual fields for manure application suitability. The team will use a Phosphorus Index Site Assessment tool to determine the field's risk of losing phosphorus to surface waters. The interns will suggest possible ways to improve management of the fields to prevent manure nutrient losses. These methods might include reducing the amount or types of fertilizers applied, building terraces, implementing buffer strips or alternative application of manures. Some solutions may be simple and can make a big difference in water quality.

For more information contact Amanda Koelling by calling 441-7180 at the Lancaster County Extension office.

Building Community Capacity

Helen Mitrofanova
Extension Educator

Often when we think of the term community, we think in geographic terms. Our community is the physical location (i.e. city, town, village or neighborhood) where we live. It means there are defined boundaries that are understood and accepted by community members. Defining communities in terms of geography, however, is only one of the possible ways of looking at them.

Communities can also be defined by common cultural heritage, language and shared interests. These are sometimes called communities of interest. In urban metropolitan areas, communities are often defined in terms of particular neighborhoods. Most of us belong to more than one community, whether we are aware of this or not. For example, a person can be part of a neighborhood community, a religious community, an ethnical community and a community of shared interests at the same time. However, for each of us, relationships with the land or with people define a community.

All people and communities have a certain amount of capacity. No one is without capacity, but often we need to develop it. Community capacity building involves many aspects and considerations. There is no clear agreement about what should or should not be included when discussing capacity building. Most often it refers to skills, knowledge and ability of community members but can also include such things as access to community resources, leadership, infrastructure, time and commitment. What is

important to realize is the heart of capacity building is people. If neighborhood or development groups cannot mobilize people, gather resources (what can not be done without people) and help people learn to work on the problems/issues effectively, few people and neighborhoods will benefit.

Capacity is simply the ways and means needed to do what should be done to improve the quality of life in a particular community or neighborhood.

Capacity building is much broader than simply skills, people and plans. It includes commitment, resources and all that is brought to bear on the process to make it successful.

Most often, it includes the following components:

- people who are willing to be involved /citizen participation
- skills, knowledge and abilities
- inclusiveness of the community diversity
- understanding of community history/community values
- ability to identify and access opportunities
- motivation to carry out initiatives
- infrastructure, supportive institutions and physical resources
- economic and financial resources
- community leadership
- community organizing
- inter-organizational collaboration/social networks

- partnership among organizations, constituency, funders and "capacity builders"
- flexibility and the use of a variety approaches
- acknowledgment of contributions/celebration of successes
- encouragement of new people and organizations to become involved/expanding of your energy pool
- good communication through the process/exchanging, transferring and understanding of information

There is a common misconception that capacity building is just another way to describe community training and skills development programs. It has a wider meaning than just training and development of individuals; the long term goal of capacity building is to take control and ownership of the process. Capacity building is much broader than simply skills, people and plans. It includes commitment, resources and all that is brought to bear on the process to make it successful. Give people time to express themselves, to adapt to change and to learn. This is best done when the community members have a voice and are in charge of the process.

"Real capacity building involves giving groups the independence to manage resources. Not just training them how to work on committees. Training is often helpful, but it is not sufficient in its own right." (Jupp, B. (200) *Working Together: Creating Better Environment for Cross-Sector Partnerships*)

(Sources: Flo Frank & Anne Smith "The Community Development Handbook" 1999; Jupp, B. "Working Together: Creating Better Environment for Cross-Sector Partnerships" 2000; Mayer, S. "Building Community Capacity: How Different Groups Contribute" 2002.)

Reducing Cigarette Litter Campaign

Keep Lincoln & Lancaster County Beautiful, a local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful (KAB), is one of nine KAB affiliates selected to participate in the second phase of the Keep America Beautiful Cigarette Litter Reduction Research Program aimed at significantly reducing cigarette litter.

Cigarette litter, including cigarette butts, packaging and lighting material are the most littered item in the United States. Cigarette butts are one of the smallest pieces of litter yet represent over 20 percent of litter collected in many community cleanup initiatives.

The first research phase, conducted in three KAB affiliates last year, showed positive results of an 18 to 38 percent reduction in cigarette litter. These affiliates installed cigarette receptacles, ran a public service message promoting the image cigarettes are litter too and distributed pocket ash trays.

For this second phase of the research program, KAB selected nine affiliates across the US in three different population groups to better determine which factor had the most impact in reducing



This billboard is part of a test campaign in downtown Lincoln.

cigarette litter. All nine affiliates will install cigarette receptacles of their choosing, one additional affiliate in each group will include the public service message and the third affiliate will also distribute pocket ash trays. Keep Lincoln & Lancaster County Beautiful was chosen to utilize all three parameters in the research effort.

The test campaign will be conducted through August 31 in the downtown Lincoln area. A pre-scan of cigarette litter was conducted prior to starting the study and a post-scan will be done at the end of August. The results of the research program will be released at Keep America Beautiful's National Conference,

in December, in Washington D.C.

Additional support has been provided by the Lincoln Journal Star, Lamar Outdoor Advertising, Lincoln Public Works and Utilities, City/County Property Management and Lincoln Parks and Recreation.

Keep Lincoln & Lancaster County Beautiful's mission is to improve waste handling practices and increase environmental awareness through education, participation and to keep Lincoln and Lancaster County litter free. KLLCB is partially funded by a grant from the Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund administered by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. (LB)