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**4-H SCHOLARSHIPS**  
 More than \$5,000 in college scholarships are available to Lancaster County 4-H'ers!  
 Applications are due Jan. 2

— see page 8

**4-H AWARDS**  
 Lancaster County 4-H awards a variety of honors to members, volunteers and supporters.  
 Applications are due Jan. 2

— see page 8

Non-Profit Organization  
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Lancaster County 4-H Council  
 University of Nebraska–Lincoln  
 Extension in Lancaster County  
 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A  
 Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507

## Internet is Popular Way to Access Extension

**Soni Cochran**  
 UNL Extension Associate

10 years ago, University of Nebraska–Extension in Lancaster County created a Web site so people could access extension’s resources via the “information superhighway.” The Web site, <http://lancaster.unl.edu>, has constantly changed and continues to evolve. However, the Web site still follows extension’s mission of having quality, reliable and timely information people can use in their lives.

### Numerous Resources

The Web site features educational publications, downloadable materials, outstanding photos, a searchable database, e-newsletters, Egg Cam, movie clips, quizzes, Master Gardener Diagnostic Center and much more.

Lancaster County extension staff work hard to keep adding helpful information and resources online. Currently, the Web site has nearly 8,000 pages of content and is updated daily!

### Recent Changes

Of course, UNL Extension’s Web site has changed drastically since its debut in 1997. It is also remarkable to note how much it has changed in just one year.

The biggest change is the overall design. This past year, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln introduced a new design and set of guidelines to be used by the entire campus. The navigation is simple and users can easily access all UNL resources. We’ve also made sure

you can easily find links to the Lincoln and Lancaster County Government Web sites and local resources.

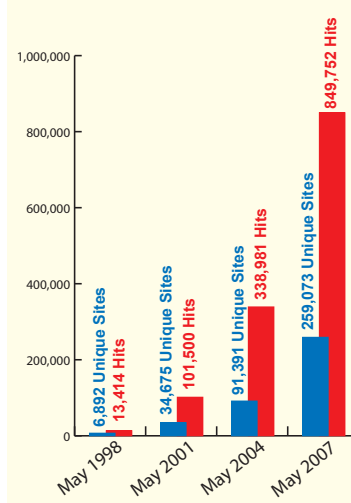
Other changes this year include an improved online calendar, updated nutrition and food safety PowerPoint presentations, an improved Egg Cam view, videos highlighting 4-H activities at the Lancaster County Fair, scholarship applications youth can fill out online and much more.

### Web Site is a Hit!

User satisfaction has helped keep UNL Extension in Lancaster County’s Web site growing by leaps and bounds. The site received nearly 9 million hits this past year and has logged **32,741,050 total hits** since 1998.

The following graph illustrates the growth of the site. A “hit” is a count that is made when you visit a page on a web site. “Unique sites served” are the individual computer addresses visiting the Web site.

<http://lancaster.unl.edu>  
 Web Site Growth Statistics



The month of May was selected for comparison purposes



“Nice Web site — I have been on it today and found lots of information. You did a good job of organization!!!

—Lancaster County rural resident

### Looking Ahead

Extension staff are noticing a change in how residents engage with us. We are sending out less information by mail. When given a choice, more than half of the people I visit with on the phone prefer to get a publication online instead of having it mailed.

E-mail requests for information continue to be popular. Depending on the questions, e-mails from residents may include a digital photo of an insect or plant.

It isn’t unusual for us to

visit with people who have been researching a subject online and still have questions or want to make sure they are getting accurate information.

We know there will always be people who don’t have access to the Internet or prefer to get information other ways. Extension’s resources can be accessed many other ways.

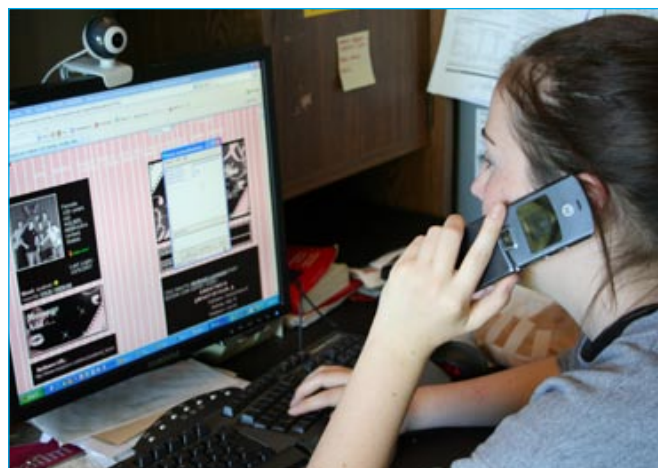
For the wired audience, extension’s Web site will continue to evolve to make sure you have access to the information you need, when you need it most.

## When it Comes to Being Wired, Youth are Leading the Way

If you are around teens between the ages of 12–17, you probably aren’t surprised to learn nearly 9 in 10 teens use the Internet. That’s up 73% from 2000 according to a recent Pew Internet & American Life Study (2005). These wired teens are more likely to have broadband access at home, are frequent users of instant messaging (IM), likely to play games online, and use the Internet to get news, seek out health information and make purchases.

An overwhelming majority of teens, 84%, own at least one personal media device: a desktop or laptop computer, a cell phone or Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). According to the study, 45% of teens have cell phones and 33% are texting.

Coined “Generation Wireless,” 18–24 young adults are more likely than younger teens to snap cell phone pictures and download content. Eight-one percent



have cell phones which is about the same average for all adults.

Recent studies indicate teen e-mail use is dropping. Teens favor more “instant” alternatives like texting and social networks like MySpace or Facebook. Instant messaging (IM) continues to be popular. When asked, teens said they used e-mail primarily as a way to talk to “old

people” or “institutions,” not their peers.

Instant messaging and texting helps teens stay in touch with their parents. Nearly one in three teens who use IM and texting also use it with their parents, not just their friends.

Of course, with these new technologies, there are new risks. For example, teens and texting can be a deadly combination when operating a vehicle. Parents also need to be proactive when it comes to social networking Web sites like MySpace. Talk with your teens. (See related article on page 10.)

And even though parents may worry about this new way teens socialize, research shows teens haven’t abandoned face-to-face contacts with their friends and peers.

Sources: *Teens and Technology* (Pew Internet & American Life Study 2005), Harris Interactive Polls, University of Minnesota Extension Service