

*The Morrill Act of 1862 established a Land Grant University
in each state where **The Leading Object**
would be instruction in agriculture and related fields*



NMSU's College of Agriculture and Home Economics

Vol. 15, No. 12, December 2001

College leads town hall security meeting on statewide Internet-based system

More than 400 of New Mexico's key community leaders representing some 40 federal, state and county agencies had an opportunity to have their emergency preparedness questions answered in a high-tech virtual town hall meeting with state and regional experts on Dec. 3.

Organized and led by Extension, the program simultaneously reached all 33 counties using the Internet-based Crisis Response Communications Network. Originally developed for Extension's distance education learning efforts, the network was initiated last spring before the tragic events of Sept. 11.

"We made history," said Extension Director Billy Dictson. "I'm aware that many state and federal agencies have been doing emergency preparedness for many years.

This forum wasn't designed to take away from those preparations, rather it was to communicate within the state at the local level."

To help New Mexico residents better cope with the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Extension brought together a panel of state and federal experts representing six agencies: the New Mexico Department of Health, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, New Mexico Livestock Board, New Mexico Environment Department, New Mexico Department of Public Safety and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Online experts stressed that danger to agricultural crops from terrorism is relatively low, but roadside feedlots and dairies represent a simple way to introduce a highly contagious disease, such as a virus,

to livestock. Quick response is critical in those situations. Another preparedness issue addressed was security of open water supplies like reservoirs. Participants at 75 sites heard that these are large bodies of water requiring a large amount of material to contaminate. It's also likely that the water would be cleaned and treated before it was released to the public.

Dictson said Extension's goal for the network is to lay the groundwork for getting a dialogue started with the right people during these stressful times. "We are making our Internet platform available to other agencies across New Mexico to help keep people informed and train key personnel in emergency preparedness," he said. ❖

The Dean's Perspective

It has been an incredible year. This time last year, we dedicated Skeen Hall. Later, we saw our undergraduate enrollment exceed 1,500 students for the first time in 24 years. We launched our distance education capability in March. Since then, we have offered three for-credit courses and 45 distance education events, while establishing high-speed Internet access in 26 offices around the state.

The Commission on Higher Education ranked the Cooperative Extension Service No. 1 and the Agricultural Experiment Station No. 3

among 38 higher education projects in the state in a quadrennial review.

Our National Agri-Marketing Association student chapter swept the national competition, and one of our students, Antonia Roybal, was selected as a regent. Our faculty and staff won a host of honors this past year, and we brought in a bright and enthusiastic group of new faculty and staff. Six administrators were confirmed in their positions. One has since retired and one has taken the interim position as vice provost for research.

Of course, most importantly to

our faculty and staff, we opened the new faculty-staff parking lot near the soon-to-be-completed Agricultural Research Service building.

Looking ahead to 2002, I see more opportunities, more accomplishment and more honors, all stemming from or creating more work. Enjoy the holidays. Get some rest. I look forward to seeing you at All-College Conference.

Family resource centers dedicated

An open house and dedication ceremony Dec. 4 showcased two student family houses on the NMSU campus that have been turned into family resource centers.

NMSU students and local families will be able to find parenting classes, activities, resource materials and child development programs at the houses, located across from the Doña Ana Branch Community College.

Faculty and staff with NMSU's departments of Family and Consumer Sciences and Extension Home Economics will staff the houses as part of their outreach efforts. Current projects include the Family Strengthening Partnership, a grant-funded parenting

education program for Doña Ana County families, the Nurturing Parenting program, the Can We Talk? family communication program and the S.T.E.P.S. life skills program.

At the dedication, a panel of parents told success stories about the program and guests toured the houses. NMSU President Jay Gogue spoke briefly about the importance of creating the resource centers for NMSU families. Dean Jerry Schickedanz; Extension Director Billy Dictson; NMSU Vice President for Facilities Ben Woods; and State legislators Mary Jane Garcia, Andy Nuñez and J. Paul Taylor also attended. ❖

Sam Steel ceremony Dec. 14

NMSU's Sam Steel Society will honor graduating students from the College of Agriculture and Home Economics and induct six honorary members Dec. 14 at 4 p.m. in the Music Center Recital Hall.

The society honors the memory of Sam Steel, who would have been the university's first graduate and the first college graduate in the New Mexico Territory had he not been killed just weeks before graduation in 1893.

The first fall semester winners of the Dean's Award Excellence will be honored during the ceremony. All graduating students who attend

will be recognized.

Honorary members inducted will be J. Michael Cerletti, interim head of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management; Lewis A. Holland, former NMSU assistant dean of instruction; Tamara Hurt, an alumna, Deming accountant and college supporter; Elizabeth McNew, scholarship donor and longtime college supporter; Adrian Richard "Dickie" Ogaz, farmer and chile task force cooperator; and J.B. Pruett, alumnus and head of Northrise Corporation, a Las Cruces-based construction firm. ❖

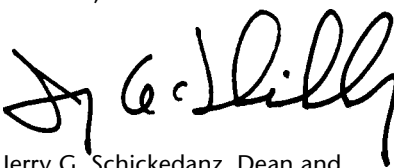
**Need to
meet
with the
dean?**

**No appointments
necessary
on Fridays,
3-5 p.m.***

*Occasionally the dean is called away, but time is blocked for drop-ins.

The Leading Object is dedicated to encouraging communication among all areas of NMSU's College of Agriculture and Home Economics.

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