



Lincoln



Omaha



Kearney



Medical Center

Nebraska Innovation Campus

An investment in the future of Nebraska.

Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC) will provide long-term economic benefits to Nebraska by expanding university research and building mutually beneficial partnerships among the private sector, government and the university. In an innovation-based economy, private-sector companies involved in agriculture, technology and other fields prefer to locate adjacent to or on a university campus where they can collaborate with university faculty and research scientists and engage university students. Similar initiatives developed by national research universities have demonstrated the significant potential for economic growth spurred by public-private partnerships.

A research campus expands opportunities for university faculty and students to tackle complex problems and collaborate with private-sector companies to develop new technologies and processes for commercialization. The potential payoff is richer learning opportunities for students, a more attractive climate for business expansion, and new jobs to help stop the brain drain and keep talent in Nebraska. The business development strategy and master plan for NIC lay out a broad vision to attract innovative companies and research in pursuit of addressing state, national, and global concerns. NIC will provide an interdisciplinary research and mixed use environment that will support collaboration among private sector interests, university faculty and researchers, and government research within UNL's core competency programs, particularly in the areas of food, fuel, and water.

The state of Nebraska has a stake in the success of Nebraska Innovation Campus. NIC has significant potential to attract new businesses, create new jobs, undertake research that leads to innovation and commercialization, and increase the state's competitiveness. Consultants for the project have estimated that, when fully developed over the next 20-25 years, Nebraska Innovation Campus could create 5,525 new jobs and grow Nebraska's annual payroll by \$267 million.

Consistent with the concept of leveraging University research for private sector economic growth, Gov. Heineman has recommended that the State of Nebraska invest \$25 million over the 2011-13 biennium in two state facilities to leverage an additional \$40 million in private sector funding to jump start the development of Nebraska Innovation Campus.

Background

The vision outlined in the business strategy and master plans for Nebraska Innovation Campus is to build on existing strengths to make an "even greater contribution to the development and growth of the Nebraska economy in the 21st century." The business strategy identifies the university's research strengths, proposes key facilities that will have the greatest impact on research and commercialization, and focuses on business outcomes that are competitive, innovative, flexible and achievable.

Nebraska Innovation Campus will provide space for public-private partnerships, allowing private businesses to access faculty research in the development of marketable innovations. The master plan includes a combination of existing and new construction that is a mix of public and private research, retail, parking, multi-purpose buildings, greenhouse and gardens, recreation and gathering areas. The campus will be developed as demand increases, eventually providing up to 1.6 million gross square feet.

Initial Capital Construction Needs

The 4-H Building: Innovation Commons

A renovated 4-H Building, or "Innovation Commons," will be a central feature at the core of the campus – an homage to the rich history of the State Fair in Lincoln. The renovated 4-H Building will incorporate space for shared amenities, conference and seminar spaces, and possibly a cafe for gathering and collaboration. Early restoration of the 4-H Building is critical as the cornerstone for NIC development. While the east half of the building is expected to generate revenue and thus would be suitable for private financing, the arena portion of the building is projected to become a conference center, a key amenity to attracting private sector companies. It is estimated that \$10 million invested over a two-year period in the conference center could be used to leverage an additional \$10 million for private development of the remaining building with convenience retail and incubation for small start-up companies.



Life Science Research Collaboration Center: Research for 21st Century Agriculture

The Life Science Research Collaboration Center is planned as a cutting edge laboratory devoted to building teams for major life science research and education relating to food and energy. It will be the cornerstone of a larger Life Sciences Initiative that also includes the planned USDA/ARS facility and new life sciences program initiatives supported by both public and private funds.

Modern life science research requires participation by faculty from multiple disciplines working together to solve significant problems. Faculty would be assigned to the building only if they were engaged in collaborative research within the mission of the Center. Consultants involved in planning Innovation Campus have concluded that university assets related to food and alternative energy are the strongest area for UNL and the ones most likely to be attractive to private sector companies. The Collaboration Center could be a key to the early success of Innovation Campus.

With agriculture as Nebraska's most pervasive industry, teaching and research related to food and alternative energy are critical to position Nebraska for the future. Agriculture in the future will benefit from efforts to make plants and animals more resistant to drought and disease, to incorporate agricultural products and by-products in the production of energy, and to find new nutritional and nutraceutical potential from plants and animals that can directly impact human health.

The United States Department of Agriculture is planning to build, when funds become available, a research laboratory on Innovation Campus focused on alternative biomass energy research. The synergies between this federal facility and the Collaboration Center, as well as its attractiveness to private sector companies, would generate unique opportunities for UNL students and faculty.

The Collaboration Center addresses the major priorities of undergraduate education and research. University research attracts high quality students and faculty to the University and jobs to Nebraska. Over the last decade external funding for research has tripled, from approximately \$90 million to nearly \$270 million, representing approximately 7,000 jobs. We also have a university-wide commitment to engaging undergraduate students in research as a critical experience as they move into the innovation economy. The Collaboration Center will create an opportunity for undergraduates and graduate students to become a part of the scientific community we hope to create on Innovation Campus.

Questions & Answers

How will Innovation Campus benefit the entire state?

Economic growth anywhere in the state contributes to overall tax revenue and thus impacts the state's fiscal soundness. The themes of food, fuel, and water are primarily related to agriculture and much of the research and development planned at NIC will directly impact the success of Nebraska agriculture. A recent example of University research providing statewide economic impact is the decision of Bayer Crop Science to locate its North American Wheat Breeding Station in Nebraska and to engage Nebraska wheat farmers in the advancement of wheat varieties. This would not have occurred but for Bayer's interest in locating near UNL wheat scientists.

What is the appropriate role of the state in this development?

The State and the University contributed resources to move the Nebraska State Fair, to improve the fair's likelihood of success, and to provide the land for Innovation Campus. The biggest challenge for Innovation Campus is to create an initial critical mass of people and projects on the property. A state investment in the project now would be the spark that will move the project forward more quickly to secure economic benefits for Nebraska.

Why should the state make this investment during a year of very tight budget restraints?

The investment called for by the Governor consists of one-time funds and will not create continuing obligations on the part of the State. The State has a major stake in the success of Innovation Campus and investment now will accelerate the timeline and allow private sector investment to begin more rapidly. A developer for Phase I has recently been selected, with infrastructure to be completed quickly through tax increment financing and construction to begin on public and private lab and office space.

What would be the return on the state's investment in Nebraska Innovation Campus?

The initial investment of \$10 million in the 4-H building would be used to develop the Conference Center portion of the 4-H building. Additional funding for planned Phase I development of this building includes \$1.5 million in tax increment financing for parking, and \$10 million financed by the developer for the planned office and laboratory space.

Early conversations with interested donors have suggested that a state investment would make a large gift for the Life Science Research building more likely. Thus the initial investment of \$15 million would leverage private philanthropy. The building itself would facilitate expansion of University research in food, fuel, and water and would generate additional federal and industrial support.

Longer term, Innovation Campus is projected to grow the state's annual payroll by \$267 million and create more than 5,500 new jobs.

What is the governance structure of Nebraska Innovation Campus?

Nebraska Innovation Campus is under the governance of the University of Nebraska. The Board of Regents owns the land and has leased it to a not-for-profit 501(c) 3 entity, the Nebraska Innovation Campus Development Corporation (NICDC). The Board of Directors of NICDC consists of five private sector directors from Lincoln, Omaha, and western Nebraska, and four University officials including the President, the Chancellor of UNL, the Vice Chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the UNL Vice Chancellor for Research.

Areas of Innovation Campus that receive state support will proceed through a traditional programming and review process as required by the state.

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