

# NEBRASKA HUMANITIES

2011

Volume XV



*"The Creation" by Harlem Renaissance painter Aaron Douglas was part of the exhibition "A Greater Spectrum: African-American Artists of Nebraska, 1912-2010."*

featuring

**The 15th Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities  
"Staying Ahead While Going Green," by Christine Todd Whitman**

and including

**The 2010 NHC Annual Report**



**W**hen we ask who we are and what our lives ought to mean, we are using the humanities. The Nebraska Humanities Council enhances the quality of life in communities across our state through programs that study the human race, its achievements, its creations, its dreams and aspirations, its failures and triumphs. The NHC promotes a better understanding of Nebraska—who we are and where we have been—to build a better future.

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## Photo and Art Credits:

The cover image, courtesy of Howard University, is “The Creation” by Harlem Renaissance painter Aaron Douglas, a graduate of the University of Nebraska. It was featured in the exhibition “A Greater Spectrum: African-American Artists of Nebraska, 1912-2010” at the Museum of Nebraska Art in Kearney. The first comprehensive survey of 22 African-American visual artists with ties to Nebraska, it featured 91 artworks from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to today. (Organizations can request a presentation through the NHC Speakers Bureau to learn more about Douglas and his role as the “Father of Black Art.”) The photo of Gov. Heineman on page 3, the photos of Christine Todd Whitman on pages 4 and 9, the photo of Chuck Shoemaker and Don Pederson on page 11, and all photos of the NHC benefit on pages 12-13 are by Daniel Flanigan. The photos on pages 15 and 16 of *Capitol Forum*, the *Kansas-Nebraska Chautauqua*, *Prime Time Family Reading Time*, a grant program entitled “IncluCity,” Jeff Barnes of the *Humanities Resource Center*, Joseph Wydeven at the 2010 *Celebration of Nebraska Books* and *Journey Stories* are from the Nebraska Humanities Council archives.

# Governor's Lecture speakers help Nebraskans connect the dots

By D. Charles Shoemaker, 2010 Chair, Nebraska Humanities Council

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One of the things I have come to look forward to every year is the Governor's Lecture in the Humanities. For those who attend the pre-lecture fundraising reception and dinner it is a chance to socialize with many interesting people from all across the state while also supporting the Humanities Council and its year-round programming. And the free public lecture is a great opportunity to hear a national speaker present on a humanities-related topic and help us connect the dots to why it matters to us as Nebraskans.

Over the years the Governor's Lecture speakers have been all over the map as far as how they connect to the humanities. Christine Todd Whitman's lecture in 2010 focused on the twin challenges of protecting the environment and energy policy—not traditional humanities topics—and brought in the humanities by probing topics like the narrow self-interests of the individual versus shared commitment to the common good, the history of the environmental movement and why it was more successful 40 years ago than it is today, and the damaging nature of today's polarized, "zero-sum" political environment.

As chairman of the Nebraska Humanities Council these past two years it has been an honor and a privilege to be a part of a group that every day, all across the state, helps bring people together to celebrate our diverse cultures and heritage and explore the humanities. I also have the unique honor of being the last council chair

of Jane Renner Hood's 23-year tenure as executive director.

It is truly remarkable to see the growth and progress of the organization under Jane's leadership: millions of dollars awarded in grants; thousands of Speakers Bureau programs across the state; children and parents reading and discussing books together; high school students exploring global issues; dozens of Chautauquas and museum exhibitions; and the list goes on. Jane was not a one-person show, but it takes a special kind of leader to nurture this progress over decades, and she brought that to the council.



*D. Charles Shoemaker*

Another sign of a good leader is one that mentors and develops a strong staff, and it is apparent to me that the council continues to have a bright future. Chris Sommerich, the new executive director, was on staff as development director for six years under Jane, and he has inherited (and added to) a talented and passionate staff that will do an excellent job adapting the council to the changing needs of our state and its citizens.



# Staying ahead while going green

Christine Todd Whitman delivered the 15th Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities October 14 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln. Her comments follow in edited form.

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By Christine Todd Whitman

You know football is in many ways a metaphor for life. It can also serve as a metaphor for government, especially as it was described by the columnist George Will. He said football combines two of the worst aspects of American life, violence punctuated by committee meetings. I prefer Vince Lombardi's definition of football and what makes for success in football. He said it is individuals committed to a group effort that make a team work, a company work, a society work, and a country work.



*Gov. Dave Heineman introduces Christine Todd Whitman.*

That's not only a good definition of how to achieve success in football; it's also a good definition of how government should work. Unfortunately, however, that's not the case as we see our government operating today, especially when it comes to confronting the twin challenges we face of protecting our environment and securing our energy future.

Global climate change and addiction to fossil fuels, the urgent need to develop new affordable reliable sources, clean sources of energy. Those are enormous problems that call out for action, and they call out for action now. Yet government continues to kick the problem down the road by not assuming the responsibility of making decisions in these areas.

Meeting these challenges is not just about accepting responsibilities and responsible stewardship for its own sake or simply about doing the right thing, and it's not just about keeping our economy growing. It's about our national security, our national way of life, and our quality of life.

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Let's take the issue of global climate change, which is a volatile topic if ever there was one. People feel extremely passionate on every side of the issue. The changing global climate brings with it all sorts of societal disruptions here and around the world that can impact our national security. Let's just take Pakistan as an example. Not only are millions being displaced from their homes because of the flooding in Pakistan, but our enemies—especially Al Qaeda—are stepping into a vacuum created by the lack of action by the Pakistani government and the world community to provide food and medicine and housing and are using that opportunity to further destabilize the government and to attack America and the West.



*Christine Todd Whitman*

Why should we care? Well, Pakistan's government is not very secure and Pakistan has a nuclear weapon. It does matter to us. It matters to us right here. Our addiction to fossil fuel makes us far too dependent on foreign sources for our oil. It also increasingly encourages exploration and drilling in places that are testing and indeed exceeding our technological ability to ensure their safety. You just have to look at what happened with Deepwater Horizon to know there are challenges out there and we need to be very careful as we take them on.

We can't be forced by the pressures of those who say we have no alternatives and we can't do anything to conserve, and by our stubborn refusal to launch the massive effort that's required to develop alternative, reliable, affordable, and abundant forms of energy, including nuclear, solar, wind and bio-fuels. These excuses are

holding us hostage to practices that threaten our environment and economic and societal future because we're not taking the actions that we need to take.

This has to change; we need more than ever before to cultivate a broad-based individual commitment to group efforts to address these problems, and that starts with each and every one of us. Unfortunately, however, we seem to have lost the shared commitment that once existed, especially in government.

It's shocking, but true, that in the course of the past 20 years, Congress has passed just one piece of major legislation affecting the environment. That was the Brownfields Redevelopment Act of 2001. It's not that our environment stopped needing protection; there's still a lot that needs to be done. It's just that the political climate in Washington has not allowed the consensus that afforded us all our early efforts and regulations to protect our environment.

In fact, the attacks on the environment and environmental protection have never been greater than they are today in Congress and across the country. We are being told that we cannot continue to protect our air and our water and our precious land and still see our economy grow. We're being presented with that zero-sum approach. That's simply a false dichotomy. We can and must do both. We've done it in the past, and we can do it again. We can protect our air, our water and our public health and quality of life and still see our economy grow.

If we look back 40 years to the early days of the modern environmental movement, we see that Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the laws that America so desperately needed in those years. It wasn't easy. Many Republicans were leery of any kind of regulation and many Democrats thought you couldn't have enough environmental protection from the federal government. But recognizing the urgent need for action in the shared area, they came together; they put aside those differences and worked

*We need more than ever before to cultivate a broad-based individual commitment to group efforts to address these problems, and that starts with each and every one of us.*

through to a consensus that actually underpins most of what we use today to protect our shared environment. Indeed, the vast majority of those laws were passed by a Congress controlled by Democrats and signed into law by a Republican president, and the votes were very seldom close.

Today, Congress seems incapable of enacting any new environmental laws and this failure is clearly driving the Obama administration's decision to try to accomplish through regulation and some very creative and broad readings of existing law what they can't get done in Congress. This has not produced the desired results from their perspective. The White House's failed effort last year to use the budget reconciliation process to pass climate-change legislation was a political disaster because that overreach scared away a lot of people who were willing to talk about what we need to do to protect and preserve our environment, willing to talk about the need to control greenhouse gases.

In the year and a half since, there has been absolutely no progress on this or in developing a comprehensive energy policy that our country so desperately needs. So how have we arrived at this sorry state of affairs? How did we get to where we are today? There is plenty of blame to go around, but I believe that the main culprit is the political polarization that is driving our country, that infects so much of public policymaking today.

We live in a time where debate on every issue has become a zero-sum game. Somebody has to lose for somebody to win. The art of political compromise has become a lost art. Vince Lombardi once said, "If winning isn't everything,

why do we keep score?" An interesting point that may work on the football field, but it doesn't work in the area of political policymaking. We have to stop keeping score and start focusing on forward progress toward shared goals.

Let me give you an example of how this zero-sum game mentality has damaged our ability to come together to make progress. It's something that occurred when I was at the Environmental Protection Agency. It had to do with our successful effort to reduce the amount of sulfur dioxide produced by non-road vehicles. Non-road vehicles—tractors and backhoes—pose a greater threat to human health and the environment than their on-road cousins, the 18-wheelers and the buses. But there was no pollution standard in place at the time for those off-road engines. So we said, "Look, we've got to do something about it." We brought together engine manufacturers and representatives of the environmental community and we sat them down in a room with our EPA people and we worked out a regulation that is now in place, that reduces the emissions from these non-road vehicles by 90 percent.

When we announced the regulation, the National Resources Defense Council said it was possibly the best thing done for human health since we took lead out of gasoline some 20 years before. I was very pleased that when you sit businesses and environmentalists down together with government—and they work together in good faith—you can come up with a solution to a problem. You can actually get things done.

Well, my euphoria over that didn't last very long. Just three days after we announced the regulation, I opened my Washington Post to find a report that other environmental groups were "apoplectic" over what the NRDC had said. They said, "If you do this, Karl Rove is going to take it out of context like a producer of a bad Broadway play takes a line out of the review and tries to sell it to people." They were worried that it would undermine their ability to attack what they perceived as a less-than-perfect record.

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Within three days after that I got a letter from the NRDC and it said, basically, “Please stop using the quote. We’ve looked at other parts of the Clean Air Act and there may be things that are better.” Here we were doing something that was right and on which we had all agreed and yet politics stood in the way.

Of course, those who oppose any environmental regulation haven’t hesitated to play the zero-sum game either. This was made abundantly clear to me very early in my tenure at the EPA, in relation to the issue of climate change. During the 2000 campaign, then-Governor Bush had made a pledge to continue what he had done as Governor of Texas and to institute a cap on carbon when he became president. That’s one of the major contributors to global climate change, so in the administration I reaffirmed that support at the first meeting I attended of the G8 ministers in Trieste.

My statement in Trieste was cautiously well received by my counterparts at the G8, all of whom had endorsed the Kyoto Protocol, because they saw this as a step forward. They were very skeptical about the commitment to the environment of the new administration, so they took this as pretty good news.

But there were those back in Washington who were apoplectic about it and immediately started putting a great deal of pressure on the White House to back away from that. Before I had even left Italy, they were lobbying the administration to repudiate the statement and to renounce the president’s campaign promise. Soon after I landed back home, the White House decided to back off that promise and that was a blow to my hopes to build a bipartisan approach to environmental policy. It also hurt us overseas. I remain convinced that the way we disengaged hurt us in international relations and continues to hurt us. We presented the world a face that said, “We don’t care what you think is important. We only care what we think is important, and

*If we look back 40 years to the early days of the modern environmental movement, we see that Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the laws that America so desperately needed in those years.*

we’re not going to play. We are not even going to try to play,” when that really wasn’t the position of the administration.

Many believed, of course, that the results of the 2008 election were going to change things dramatically, that you had a president committed to change and an environmental policy with a Congress that was on his side to a degree that we hadn’t seen in recent history. Congress was committed to comprehensive climate change legislation the president had called for and they tried to take immediate action, and most expected some form of legislation to pass. Yet here we are, two years later, and absolutely nothing has happened.

Last month the columnist George Will wrote a piece in the Washington Post entitled “The Environmental Movement in Retreat,” pointing out that never before had so many positive forces come together—and yet accomplished so little—and his prime example was the failure of climate change legislation. Even though environmentalists had strong policy support on Capitol Hill and in the White House, they accomplished absolutely nothing in this area. Will’s question was, “Has a political movement ever made so little of so many advantages?” It’s a question worth considering, especially by those who believe we need to see action now.

I would add another question to that. Have the environmental advocates damaged their credibility with the American people? People are skeptical of them today, as they have long been of those who have opposed any kind of environmental regulation and have blocked efforts

to improve and expand our approach to energy. In a very real sense, today's environmental advocates are just another big Washington institution, where they have high paid lobbyists, slick campaign ads, sophisticated fundraising techniques, and access to all the corridors of power in Washington, D.C. And they are every bit as professional as their business counterparts.

Increasingly, people see this professional environmental advocate as yet another group of players in Washington. Average citizens seem to be growing more and more skeptical of the arguments they put forward and taking it with that proverbial grain of salt, and they're more dubious about their tactics in drawing attention to some of these issues. To many observers, today's environmental movement is as much a part of the establishment as any big oil company, agricultural giant or too-big-to-fail bank. When billionaires are making million-dollar contributions to fight environmental issues on ballots, the average person just shakes his head and walks away from it and says, "I don't have a role to play here. I don't know what to do."

The approach they have taken on the issue of climate change has undermined their credibility. It's a classic case of overreach to build public support. It's a kind of combination of Chicken Little and the little-boy-who-cried-wolf approach to things, which is an interesting combination. They predicted imminent environmental Armageddon from global warming. The world was going to end tomorrow. They placed all the blame for warming on human activity. They tried to shut down or belittle dissent, and then they used some clever inside-the-Beltway legislative legerdemain to get their agenda through.

But what do they have to show for that approach? Not very much. They haven't achieved a single legislative accomplishment on what they have always said was their biggest issue, the issue of climate change. What's more important and more troubling is that they have helped make the public even more skeptical about the need

for action to address some very real problems. People's confidence in the environmental movement has been undermined by the tactics used and by the arguments put forward, and it has placed their credibility in the same category as those who say, "We need to do nothing to protect our natural resources, nature will take care of any problem we cause, if, in fact, we are causing any problem at all through our behavior."

Too often the arguments of the environmental lobbyists have suffered from the perception that they are simplistic, apocalyptic, disingenuous and anti-prosperity, and in many respects they have been. Instead of talking about global warming, they should have been talking about global climate change. Instead of blaming human activity for causing climate change, they should have acknowledged that the Earth's climate has been changing for 4½ billion years, but that human activity is contributing in some measure to climate change by exacerbating that natural phenomenon.

Instead of stifling those with whom they do not agree, they should have welcomed an open and healthy dialogue and discussion about the issue. Get the facts out. Acknowledge it's a big issue, and acknowledge that there are skeptics on both sides. Instead of employing slick parliamentary tactics in Washington, they should have been willing to take the case to the people and win the support of the people at large, because that's what we are missing in this discussion.

In short, instead of trying to frighten people into action, they should be trying to reason with them. Scare tactics can work up to a point in a democracy such as ours, but at the end of the



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day it doesn't work for political movements over the long term. It's not the way we do things over the long term in this country, and how we respond, and it gave those who want to see no further action in protecting the climate or the environment wonderful openings to go after them, because their statements were so broad that they opened the door to skeptics.

The strategy and tactics of both sides have helped to undermine the broad consensus that we have among the American people for sensible, effective environmental policy. In USA Today, a poll conducted in August asked people to rate nine different issues that they were concerned about in this election cycle, and the environment was number nine.

A recent CNN poll said that three percent of those polled named energy and the environment as among the most important issues facing our country today. The fallout of this loss of consensus for policy initiatives is enormous. By driving the environment to the bottom of the policy agenda, it has become far less likely that we will see the sort of sensible, balanced environmental and energy policies that we need to go forward. If this continues, it will have grave consequences for the future of this country.

Today's environmental policy and energy policies have never been more closely entwined or aligned. The need to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels has never been greater. That's true from an environmental protection point of view and from an energy production perspective, and it's true no matter what your view on climate change. Even if you do not believe that humans are contributing in any way to global climate change, doesn't it just make sense to take greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere to help clean our air, the air we breathe everyday? Even if you don't believe that fossil fuels pose any threat to our environment, who would argue that decreasing our reliance on foreign oil isn't a good national security goal? And even if you don't believe that we must find alternatives to fossil fuels, who

***The real threat we face today is not that America will become socialist, but that America will become protectionist as millions of workers feel insecure about health care and pension security in a global economy.***

would argue that developing cleaner, more abundant, more reliable and more affordable forms of energy isn't a good economic move for our country?

Yet when it comes to the pursuit of contemporary environmental and energy policy, we have become very good at saying no to just about any alternative that we can think of. There is always a reason to oppose something. If we want to preserve our economic strength in our way of life, we are going to have to start to learn to say yes. Too many sensible solutions have been unwisely and unprofitably politicized and demonized by both sides of the issues.

We don't want to import more foreign oil for a whole host of very good reasons, but neither do we want to engage in domestic exploration. We don't want to talk about that. We don't want to use coal because it's dirty, but we don't want to invest the way we need to in new clean-coal technology. We like natural gas because we have lots of it and it's relatively clean, but nobody wants a gas pipeline anywhere near them.

We want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that come from producing energy, but we don't even want to talk about nuclear power, even though that's the only form of base power that releases no greenhouse gases or other regulated pollutants when it's producing power. Even wind turbines come under attack as being visual pollution and by those who worry about birds. Windmills tend to be in flyways because that's the way the wind blows.

While we fiddle, the rest of the world is moving forward. We're not the only ones facing these

issues, and there are other countries around the world that are taking advantage of this. There is no better example than China. In his last book, "Beyond Peace," published just after he died in 1994, Richard Nixon wrote that he believed China could become the world's richest capitalist economy in the next century. In 1990 I had an opportunity to sit down with him, and he said, "China is the next superpower, and we'd better be nice to her now and engage her now while she needs us, because she's not going to need us very much longer." He went on to quote, in his book, Napoleon, who 200 years before had said of China, "There lies a sleeping giant. Let him sleep, because when he awakes, he will conquer the world." Now we are a decade into that next century, and it appears that Mr. Nixon and Napoleon were pretty well on the mark.

Earlier this year, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, writing from Hong Kong, quoted a leading Chinese official who said, "China was asleep during the Industrial Revolution. She was waking during the Information Technology Revolution. She intends to participate fully in the Green Revolution." Friedman went on to admit that he was stunned to learn of the sheer volume of wind, solar, and nuclear power, mass transit and more efficient coal-burning projects that were underway in China.

Over the past year, so many new solar power makers have emerged in China that the price of solar has fallen from roughly 59 cents a kilowatt-hour to 16 cents. China is undertaking the world's most rapid expansion of nuclear power. It's expected to build 50 new reactors by 2020. The rest of the world combined might build 15. China's potential as a new market for a host of goods and services remains vast. Its economy continues to grow in double digits. Its potential as a partner in scientific, technological and environmental progress is also huge. There is enormous opportunity in China, and China is going green.

Today China is building more nuclear reactors and clean coal facilities than we are. Tomorrow,

China will take the lead in developing the next generation of technology. They're not satisfied with bringing in other countries' technologies and letting them build. They're watching that technology. They're analyzing it and they are taking it to the next step, unless we get there first. And China is responding to the growing global appetite for a cleaner environment and to their citizens' demand for cleaner air and water.

We must do the same. The United States must not let itself fall behind in the Green Revolution. There is no need for us to do that. China could leave us in the dust if we fail to meet the challenges that are posed through our own technological and economic ability to succeed. Our potential is enormous as well. We have the brainpower to do what we need to do. We need to make the investment in it. Our economic security, our national security and our standing in the world all depend on us engaging in this way. When it comes to both environmental and energy policy, we are in desperate need of some common sense. It's time we start discussing the issues on their merits, not on what makes the best political argument or the best campaign ad. It's not about politics; it's about policy.

There are two things that can bring about this change. One—and I hope we never see it—is a cataclysmic environmental disaster or a massive disruption to our current source of energy. That's what gets our attention in this country. We respond well to disasters. I don't even want to imagine what that would look like, especially since the recent disaster in the Gulf of Mexico did absolutely nothing to heighten the awareness or concern about the environment and environmental protection.



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The second is for the environmental movement to go back to its roots, the grassroots from which it developed. It wasn't until the average American, regular everyday people, started to demand an end to the practices that were destroying our environment that we saw our government take action. The enactment of all the environmental laws that have done so much to make our air cleaner, our water purer, and to better protect our land, didn't come about because the elites demanded it, because somebody up high said this is what we need to do. Those laws came about because people at the grassroots said, "Enough! No more excuses, it's time to act, and if you don't, we will remember in November." Some of us here remember the late 1960s when our political system was undergoing what was perhaps the greatest turmoil since the Civil War. Yet even in the midst of such conflict, we were able to come together to enact far-reaching environmental laws and regulations.

That unity of purpose was driven by the grassroots. It crossed party lines, it overcame generational boundaries, and it even bridged the divides of race and class. Everyone came together. The benefits of that effort are being realized today. We're still seeing and we're still benefiting from what we did before. Our air is cleaner, our water is purer, and our land is better protected than it was 40 years ago when the Environmental Protection Agency was established.

It's all because people came together and demanded it. The challenges we face today are no less urgent than those 40 years ago. That's why we need a similar unity of purpose in the grassroots starting today, starting now. The American people need to reclaim the environmental movement from both professional environmental advocates and from those who make it their life's work to oppose any form of environmental regulation or progress.

It's clear that without a groundswell of support from the grassroots, the status quo will just continue to go along as it has been. We will

continue to be treated to exaggerated claims from both sides that just serve to polarize people more, confuse them completely, and have them turning on their heels saying, "I can't deal with it."

We need to appeal to that common sense that we should expect from our elected representatives. Vince Lombardi was right. Individual commitment to a group effort that makes a society work is what's going to work in this case. Today, perhaps more than any time in recent history, we need that individual commitment to group goals. We need to work together. The next generation of environmental progress depends on a new generation of environmental activism.

Activism driven by the average American can commit to the idea that we should leave to our children and grandchildren a cleaner environment and a more prosperous, healthy country than the one we have today. We should hearken back to the Native American saying that we don't inherit the land from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

We must remember that success can be achieved if we, as individuals, will commit to a common cause and follow it all the way through. That's how it has happened in the past, that's how it can happen again, and it happens if all of us are willing to get engaged.



*Christine Todd Whitman was governor of New Jersey from 1994 through 2000, the state's first woman chief executive, and served in the cabinet of President George W. Bush as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from January 2001 to June 2003. She is president of The Whitman Strategy Group (WSG), a consulting firm that specializes in energy and environmental issues.*



# Sower Award goes to former state senator

**Don Pederson of Lincoln received the 2010 Sower Award in the Humanities during ceremonies at the Governor's Lecture in the Humanities, October 14 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.**

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The Nebraska Humanities Council and Foundation honored former State Sen. Don Pederson with its 2010 Sower Award in recognition of his work championing the humanities statewide.

"Few public servants have done as much for the humanities in Nebraska as Don Pederson," said Rhonda Seacrest, chair of the Sower Award Committee.

Pederson joined the Nebraska Humanities Council board of directors in 2002, but his involvement with the council's work began a decade earlier. He recalls a fateful lunch in 1992 with Keith Blackledge, then-editor of the North Platte Telegraph, and Jane Hood, executive director of the council. "I was sold on the idea of the North Platte Rotary applying to bring the Great Plains Chautauqua to North Platte during the summer of 1993," he said. "I was president of Rotary, and once we learned that North Platte would be one of the two Chautauqua sites in Nebraska that next summer, it was Chautauqua 24-7!"

As a member of the Legislature, he worked with state Sen. LaVon Crosby to craft the 1998 legislation establishing the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. The first state endowment in the nation for both the humanities and the arts, it was appropriated \$5 million that year. After Pederson left the Legislature, he worked with the endowment to respond successfully to a challenge by Omahan Dick Holland in 2007 to double the endowment's fund to \$10 million if it were matched dollar-for-dollar by private funds.

Pederson was chair of the NHC board from 2006 to 2008. "We have never had a board member who worked harder to preserve federal and state support for the humanities than Don," Hood said. "He is respected by the Legislature and our Congressional delegation, and it makes it so much easier to demonstrate the necessity of public support for our statewide work if Don is telling his former colleagues that the humanities are important to Nebraskans. He makes that argument in terms that they appreciate: the impact of the humanities on their constituents' lives and the frugality with which we use tax-payers' dollars to implement our mission."



*NHC Chairman Chuck Shoemaker presents Sower Award to Don Pederson.*

Born in Hastings, Pederson graduated from Benson High School, attended the University of Omaha, Grinnell College, and the University of Nebraska Law College, where he graduated in 1954. He served in the county attorney's office in Scottsbluff before moving to North Platte to practice law in 1957. Gov. Ben Nelson appointed Pederson to the Legislature in 1996, and he was elected to the office later that year. He served on the appropriations committee, chairing the committee from 2004 to 2006, and left the Legislature in 2006.



# Governor's lecture contributors gather at pre-lecture benefit

Supporters of the 15th Governor's Lecture in the Humanities attended a benefit dinner, chaired by Lana Flagtwet with vice-chairs Diane Brownell and Marilyn Hadley, to promote the council's year-round programming. Gathering October 14 at Embassy Suites in Lincoln, they shared an appreciation for the humanities. The event was co-sponsored by E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, Union Pacific and the University of Nebraska.



*Nancy Haessler, Bonnie Williams, Judy Wilcox, Ann Myers*



*Gov. Dave Heineman, First Lady Sally Ganem, Christine Todd Whitman, Don Pederson*



*Diane Brownell, Lana Flagtwet, Marilyn Hadley*



*Jack and Sally Campbell*



*Dianne Kennedy, Mary Nefsky, Donna Woods*



*June and Don Pederson and family*



*Susan Hoppe, Ron and Chris Harris, Art Thompson*



*June Pederson, Patty Beutler, Jim and Karen O'Connor, Glenn Johnson*



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*Sen. Galen Hadley, First Lady Sally Ganem, Christine Todd Whitman, Gov. Dave Heineman, Marilyn Hadley*



*Karen Dielman, Chuck Shoemaker, Chris Sommerich, Lynne Friedewald*



*Margery and Lloyd Ambrosius, John Meakin*

All photos by  
Daniel Flanigan



*Marc Snow, Kit Dimon, Pam Snow, Julie Jacobson*

# Council is a critical partner for grants and programming

By Christopher Sommerich, Executive Director, Nebraska Humanities Council

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“Human beings are the only animals that \_\_\_\_\_.”

That thought-provoking, fill-in-the blank sentence jumped out at me recently while reading a magazine article about advances in artificial intelligence. There seem to be many possibilities for completing that sentence... or are there? What a great humanities question.

The humanities are very broad, but ultimately come down to contemplating what it means to be human and exploring our accomplishments (and failures) as individuals and as a species. These activities are not luxuries, but rather are essential to our future as a strong, vibrant, democratic society.

In 2010 the Nebraska Humanities Council remained a dependable and critical partner to many educational and cultural institutions throughout the state who were feeling the impact of the economic recession. By funding a near-record 93 grants totaling more than \$300,000, the council provided vital funding to local organizations all across the state, enabling them to continue providing their communities with access to humanities programs.

Providing grants in our state was the impetus for the creation of the Nebraska Humanities Council in 1973, but as the needs of our state have evolved, so has the council. As you can see from the following snapshots of our programs (many of which we provide directly), we are reaching people of all ages and walks of life in a variety of ways to accomplish the first goal of our strategic plan: “make high-quality, relevant, and affordable humanities programming available to all Nebraskans.”

This would not be possible without the long list of partner organizations we work with throughout the state: the museums, libraries, historical societies, schools, civic groups, and many other entities (and people behind them) who provide valuable services to Nebraska’s citizens. It also would not be possible without our affiliation with the National Endowment for the Humanities, the support of Gov. Dave Heineman and the Nebraska Legislature, our closest partners the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities and Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and you, our individual supporters.

As the new executive director of the Nebraska Humanities Council, I feel the strongest sense of obligation to properly steward our resources—financial and otherwise—to be as effective and efficient as possible at meeting the humanities needs of our state. Thank you for your involvement!



*Chris Sommerich*

## Capitol Forum on America's Future

- 26 Nebraska high school teachers participated with their social studies classes, reaching some 1,500 students.
- 89 percent of students felt more informed about politics and current events.
- 80 percent believe that the experience will have a long-term impact on their lives as citizens and voters.

“Capitol Forum allowed me to see outside my views. By doing this, I have opened my mind to new possibilities.”

—A participating student



*Students discuss America's future during the 2010 Capitol Forum.*



*Patrick McGinnis as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Doug Watson as Will Rogers*

## Kansas-Nebraska Chautauqua: “Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties”

- 4,178 people attended in Columbus and North Platte.

“I have attended nearly all the Chautauqua programs for more than a decade, and I do believe this was the BEST I have ever seen...fabulous evening.”

—An audience member

## Prime Time Family Reading Time

- 360 families participated in 12 programs (six weekly sessions each) in Lincoln, Norfolk, North Omaha, Scottsbluff, and South Omaha.
- 88 percent of parents report reading more frequently with their children after participating in *Prime Time*.

“I think the discussions became better each week. More students opened up, and more parents shared. We really created a bond and sense of community.”

—A *Prime Time* storyteller



*Young students read and discuss books with their families at Prime Time.*



*A grant to the Conference for Inclusive Communities funded “IncluCity,” a human relations and leadership program for youth.*

## Grants

- 93 grants were awarded, totaling \$308,893 in 35 communities.

“84 schools and more than 8,000 teachers and students attended the Plum Creek Children’s Literacy Festival resulting in a renewed appreciation for literature and writing skills by the attending students, a new outlook on authors and illustrators by the attending teachers, administrators and media specialists, and an understanding of other people and their circumstances, lives and cultures through the experience of storytelling.”

—Plum Creek Literacy Festival director



Jeff Barnes presents “The Forts of Nebraska” at the Oakland Public Library in August 2010.

## Humanities Resource Center

- 380 Speakers Bureau programs reached 34,920 Nebraskans.
- 104 of these programs took place in schools, serving 15,204 students.

“The programs offered through the Nebraska Humanities Council are a great opportunity for not-for-profit assisted living facilities to be able to afford and enjoy wonderful speakers.”

—Assisted living activities director

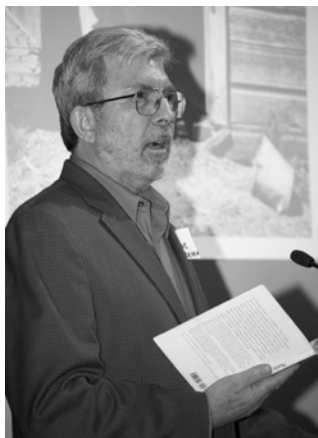
## Museum on Main Street

Six communities have been selected for the 2012 tour of the *Journey Stories* Smithsonian Institution exhibit—Alliance, Cozad, Fort Calhoun, Madison, North Platte and O’Neill.

“*Journey Stories* is about courage, new beginnings, freedom, adventure and fun.”  
—from the Smithsonian’s *Journey Stories* exhibition brochure



Coming from the Smithsonian in 2012!



## Nebraska Book Festival / Celebration of Nebraska Books

“It was an excellent afternoon—an authentic celebration of books about Nebraska and by Nebraska authors!”

—An attendee of the 2010 Celebration of Nebraska Books

*Joseph Wydeven shares the story of Nebraska writer and photographer Wright Morris, whose book “The Home Place” was the 2010 One Book One Nebraska selection.*

In 2010, the Nebraska Humanities Council funded programs in the following 143 communities:

Adams, Ainsworth, Albion, Allen, Alliance, Alma, Arapahoe, Arlington, Ashland, Atkinson, Auburn, Aurora, Bancroft, Bassett, Beatrice, Bellevue, Bennington, Blair, Bloomfield, Boys Town, Broken Bow, Brownville, Burwell, Callaway, Central City, Chadron, Chappell, Columbus, Cordova, Cozad, Crawford, Creighton, Crete, Crofton, Davenport, David City, De Witt, Denton, Deshler, Eagle, Elgin, Emerson, Eustis, Fairbury, Fairmont, Falls City, Fort Calhoun, Fremont, Fullerton, Geneva, Genoa, Gering, Gothenburg, Grand Island, Grant, Greeley, Gretna, Halsey, Harrison, Hartington, Hastings, Hayes Center, Hebron, Herman, Holdrege, Homer, Humboldt, Indianola, Kearney, La Vista, Lawrence, Lexington, Lincoln, Litchfield, Louisville, Loup City, Lyons, Madison, McCook, Meadow Grove, Milford, Milligan, Minden, Mullen, Nebraska City, Neligh, Niobrara, Norfolk, North Platte, Oakland, Omaha, O’Neill, Ord, Osceola, Palmyra, Papillion, Pawnee City, Pender, Peru, Petersburg, Plattsmouth, Plymouth, Ponca, Randolph, Ravenna, Raymond, Red Cloud, Schuyler, Scottsbluff, Seward, Sidney, South Sioux City, St. Edward, St. Libory, St. Paul, Stamford, Stanton, Sterling, Stromsburg, Stuart, Superior, Sutherland, Sutton, Syracuse, Table Rock, Tecumseh, Tekamah, Thedford, Tilden, Valentine, Valley, Wahoo, Wakefield, Walthill, Wayne, Weeping Water, West Point, Wilber, Wood River, Wymore, York, Yutan

# 2010 Financial Overview

## Our Dollars Working in Communities Across Nebraska

### Support

National Endowment for the Humanities Grants.....	\$796,807
State Appropriations.....	\$195,000
Nebraska Cultural Endowment.....	\$156,842
Private Cash Contributions.....	\$503,406
Earned Income.....	\$24,448
Miscellaneous Income.....	\$1,928
Interest Income.....	\$1,020
Cost Share: Cash and In-kind.....	\$2,553,667
<b>Total support.....</b>	<b>\$4,233,119</b>

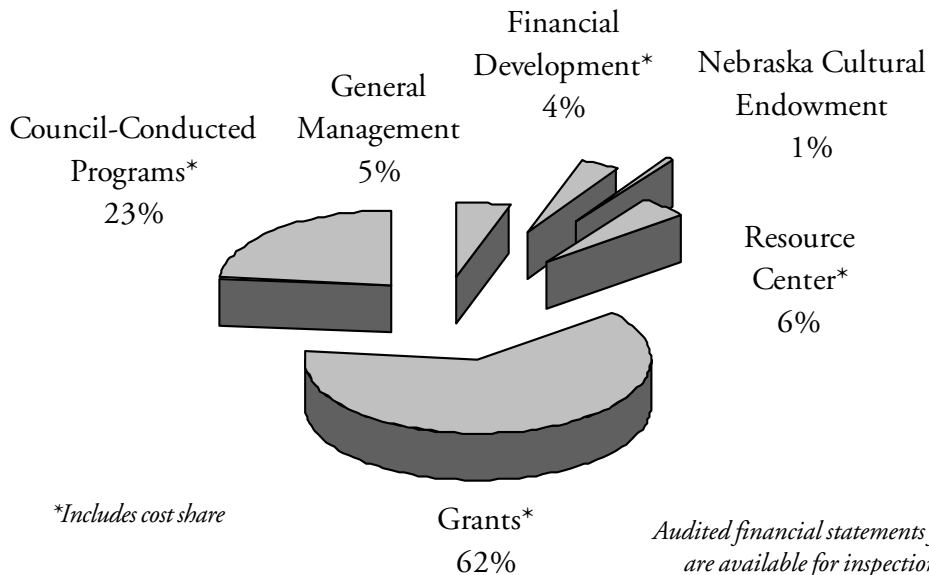
### Expenses

General Management.....	\$200,545
Financial Development.....	\$145,284
Nebraska Cultural Endowment.....	\$37,477
Resource Center/Speakers Bureau Programs.....	\$132,697
Grants.....	\$334,975
Council-Conducted Programs.....	\$679,433
Cost Share from Grantees and Volunteers.....	\$2,553,667
<b>Total expenses.....</b>	<b>\$4,084,078</b>

Excess (deficit) of support and revenue over expenses\*..... \$149,041

*\*The excess revenue is partially due to the fact that the fiscal year included two Governor's Lectures, an annual event that includes a fund-raising dinner. Non-profit accounting standards require that revenues are recognized in the same fiscal year that events' primary expenditures take place.*

## 2010 Summary of Expenses



*\*Includes cost share*

*Audited financial statements from Dana F. Cole and Co. are available for inspection at the NHC office and on our website at [www.nebraskahumanities.org](http://www.nebraskahumanities.org)*

# Contributors January through December 2010

The Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities thank the following donors for their contributions during the 2010 calendar year. Because annual funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities helps cover the NHC's administrative expenses, private donations directly support our public programs. We appreciate donations of all sizes, but due to space limitations recognition below begins at the member level (\$45). If we have not reported your gift correctly, please contact us.

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We invite you to join the Vision Circle of donors to the Nebraska Humanities Council. Your tax-deductible contribution of \$1,000 or more will help nurture a vibrant civic and cultural life in Nebraska and ensure continued statewide access to the humanities now and for future generations. We are grateful to the following individuals for generously supporting current humanities programs by joining the Vision Circle in 2010:

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