



# Stepping up for South Central

## FARMERS, CROP CONSULTANTS AMONG CENTER'S DEFENDERS AT HEARING

ANDY RAUN  
Hastings Tribune

LINCOLN — On an idyllic fall afternoon when golden fields of corn and soybeans seemed to call out, siren-like, for harvest, many farmers in central Nebraska resisted, going to a meeting instead.

They took a break from the combine and grain truck, donning coat and tie and stepping before a microphone to help make the case for their advisers and friends at the South Central Research & Extension Center.

South Central, which is in western

Clay County, has been targeted for closure by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. About 23 speakers took part in a public hearing to articulate the reasons for opposition to the proposed cost-cutting measure.

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UNL official says cuts painful but necessary; committee's recommendations non-binding. — Page A5

"I feel it will have long-term detrimental effects to row-crop agriculture," said Craig Buescher, a Deweese area farmer who said he had turned many times to SCREC faculty and staff for help and advice.

About 15 people, including several from Tribland, testified before UNL's Academic Planning Committee in an L.W. Chase Hall audi-

torium on East Campus in Lincoln, where the two-hour hearing originated.

Another eight spoke from a meeting room at SCREC headquarters west of Clay Center. The sites were joined by an interactive audio-video satellite hookup.

About 50 people, including many South Central staffers, watched the hearing from Clay Center. Nearly 50 more, including about 10 of the 14 committee members, were on hand at the Lincoln site.

To a one, testifiers spoke out against closing South Central, one of UNL's five regional research and extension centers around the state. Many received applause from the Clay Center site following their remarks.

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BRENT McCOWN/Tribune

An audience at the South Central Research and Extension Center near Clay Center listens as John Owens, University of Nebraska-Lincoln vice chancellor for agriculture and natural resources, speaks via satellite from Lincoln Thursday afternoon at a public hearing on the proposed closure of SCREC.

# THE BATTLE FROM BUNKER HILL

NAD BUNKERS REBORN  
AS RESORT FOR AVID HUNTERS



BRENT McCOWN/Tribune

Above: A group of shooters check out other scores posted in front of the dinner hall and sleeping quarters after finishing their second round during the second annual Bunker Hill Sporting Clay Shoot Sunday east of Hastings. Top right: Morley Koll of Ord eyes a clay pigeon at the first station at Bunker Hill Sunday.

REBECCA SVEC  
Hastings Tribune

**N** AVAL AMMUNITION DEPOT — It looks like a road that goes nowhere. Gravel-coated and narrow. Straight as an arrow.

Lined with rhythmic, grass-covered vestiges of World War II. On a damp September day, sunflowers in bloom soften the road's edges.

A doe on the road spots a car in the distance and bounds, unhurriedly, into the yellow cover.

People from all walks of life and zip codes across the country know this road, in the midst of the former Naval Ammunition Depot in the middle of central Nebraska.

TNN television crews and actor Jamison Parker found their way here. So did doctors from California, professional football players and corporate executives from Budweiser.

Van-loads of eager kids and co-workers headed to Christmas parties take this turnoff, to a destination sought for its mix of isolation and comfort, created by nature, war — and three years ago —



BRENT McCOWN/Tribune

The dining area provides personalized meals for each hunter.

Owen and Kim Nelson of Fairfield. The road ends at Bunker Hill Hunting Resort.

The Nelsons call it "an idea that blossomed."

Both grew up hunting on 150,000 Central-Flyway acres in a wildlife refuge in their home state of South Dakota.

When Owen's job with Hastings

Pork brought them to Nebraska, the NAD was among their new hunting grounds. They liked it there, in the prairie habitat, enough that an idea took shape to create a resort.

In 1999 Kim put together designs to turn two of the deserted bunkers that define the NAD into lodge and living spaces.

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# State asks LRNRD to halt well drilling

## METERING PROGRAM MAY LIE AHEAD

DIANA LAMBSON  
Hastings Tribune

ALMA — A temporary moratorium on well drilling and a metering program for the entire Lower Republican Natural Resources District may lie ahead.

Nebraska Assistant Attorney General David Cookson announced Thursday the state of Nebraska was requesting the moratorium and metering program.

"We request the natural resources district schedule public hearings to consider regulations adopting temporary suspension on well drilling in parts of the Lower Republican Natural Resources District," Cookson said. "We also request a public hearing be scheduled for the same time to consider regulations for a metering program in the entire district."

Cookson, the state's lead legal counsel in the lawsuit filed against it by Kansas over Republican River flows, said the moratorium was connected to a ground and surface water study that was suspended earlier due

to the lawsuit.

The study was initiated under LB108, a 1996 Nebraska law recognizing the connection between groundwater and surface water. During such a study, the district may adopt regulations prohibiting well drilling for up to five years.

Cookson said the original legislation permitting the prohibition was to sunset Dec. 31. However, the Nebraska Legislature extended that deadline to Dec. 31, 2007. If the study is not completed by then, the Legislature could consider further action.

Cookson declined to comment on the reasons for the moratorium and metering, saying the details of why, when and where would be answered at the public hearings.

In response to Cookson's announcement, the LRNRD board of directors approved scheduling the public hearing for 2 p.m. Dec. 2. The hearing will be at the Johnson Center in Alma.

The board also will conduct a special meeting at 6 p.m. at the Johnson Center. District Manager Mike Clements was directed to advertise both events.

# Congress clears way for Bush to use force against Iraq

JIM ABRAMS  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush now has the overwhelming approval of Congress to use force against Iraq. But the drive for U.N. approval is meeting stiff resistance from France.

After days of debate, the House and Senate passed and sent to the White House on Thursday a resolution authorizing the president to use military force, if necessary, to compel Iraq to get rid of its biological and chemical weapons and disband its nuclear weapons program.

"The days of Iraq acting as an outlaw state are coming to an end," Bush said.

But at the United Nations, even an offer to compromise failed to win France's support for a tough Security Council resolution proposed jointly by the

United States and Britain.

Responding to the reluctance of France, and Russia, to have the Council approve war with Iraq, U.S. diplomats offered to remove from the resolution a threat to use "all necessary means" to compel Iraq to disarm, a U.S. official told The Associated Press on Friday.

The resolution simply would threaten consequences, but not call for an automatic, forceful response. Still, the United States would be able to interpret "consequences" as meaning force, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

France continues to insist on two resolutions. The first would authorize new international weapons inspections of suspect sites in Iraq. Any consideration of using force would depend on the result of the searches and require further debate.

## Weather

Lo: 48  
Hi: 55  
Much cooler and windy Saturday with a chance of rain.



Art by Cortney Pauley, 11, Ayr School

## BACK ON TOUR DUTY

LINCOLN — There's a familiar face in the halls of the state Capitol again. Nine months after being fired because of state budget cuts, Capitol tour guide Roxanne Smith is back. She gave her first tour Thursday

and she couldn't be happier. "Your spirit soars; you think this is the meaning of life. This is what I was meant to do," Smith said today. Calls of "welcome home" and "you're the best" echoed through the halls of the Capitol on Friday morning as workers spotted Smith

back at her familiar post. Smith had worked 15 years as the head tour guide before her job as supervisor of tourism and special events was eliminated in January following the first round of budget cuts made by the Legislature last fall.

The Associated Press

## State

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BRENT  
McCOWN/  
TribuneGary  
Wilson  
loads his  
shotgun as  
he gets  
ready for  
the next  
round of  
clay pigeon  
shooting.

# THE BATTLE FROM BUNKER HILL

NAD BUNKERS REBORN  
AS RESORT FOR AVID HUNTERS

BRENT McCOWN/  
TribuneRex Bosley of  
Holdrege  
chats with  
Bunker Hill  
owner Owen  
Nelson about  
the living  
area where  
hunters stay  
while at  
Bunker Hill.

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The results helped them create a destination, both for hunters and for groups wanting a unique place to gather.

In a few short years, the business evolved from about 50 "weekend hunters" — mostly acquaintances — the first year, to the 500 hunters scheduled for the 2002-03 season.

Bunker Hill is the only Cabela's Outdoor Adventures certified wing-shooting destination in Nebraska for pheasants, chukars and quail, and is a host site for statewide hunting events.

Meanwhile, the renovated bunkers draw their own share of business. A Hastings marketing firm chose Bunker Hill for an annual retreat. Another company treated employees to a Hawaiian luau there. It is a site of wedding receptions and family reunions.

"It has really exceeded our expectations; a hobby that has grown into a very good business," Owen said.

And one with national exposure. Hunters far from the Midwest — who may not know where Omaha, Lincoln or Interstate 80 are located — know of Bunker Hill.

The resort offers 1,000 acres in controlled shooting with a specialty of upland game bird hunts. Duck and goose hunting are offered on a limited basis. Turkey and white-tail deer hunting are available by request.

An on-site hatchery produces chukar, bob-white quail, red leg pheasant and Hungarian partridge, about 45,000 birds in all — used for Bunker Hill hunting or sold to other hunting resorts.

The 2,000 acres the Nelsons lease at NAD provide a unique site for a hunting resort. Hunters, generally, are fascinated by the history, Owen said.

NAD was a top site for building and storing munitions during World War II. The depot displaced farms, brought a population boom and created a city of buildings and bunkers that supplied the war.

Today, the main reminder of that era is miles of 8-inch concrete, igloo-shaped bunkers, covered with grass to avoid radar detection during the war.

Turning the bunkers into a restaurant/lodge and bunkhouse took some thought.

"You just don't put a nail in the wall to hang a picture," Kim said.

She wanted to create spaces with a hunting-lodge feel and the amenities of a hotel.

Bunker doors open to oak and glass entrances. The ceiling of the lodge is covered with outdoor clothing material that meets oak wainscoting along the walls. Concrete floors are painted hunter green.

Eight world-record mounts line the walls.

Round dining tables and a solid pine bar and kitchen fill one 2,000-square-foot bunker.

The bunker next door contains 10 bedrooms and two full baths. It continues the mountain-retreat feel with a wall of glass, oak and river rock, a fireplace and overstuffed furniture. It's a place for hunting dogs to stretch out by the fire as hunters swap stories.

There are big-screen televisions and Internet lines to connect to the



BRENT McCOWN / Tribune

Savannah Sammons of Logan, Kan., takes aim at a clay pigeon while her father, Jeff, and brother, Zackary, watch with volunteer puller Zach McCartney.



BRENT McCOWN / Tribune

Left: Hunter Doug Scheele of Kearney (right) chats with Bunker Hill owner Owen Nelson. Scheele likes the facilities so much that he said he'll be back every year. Above: The living area at Bunker Hill offers accommodations so nice that it feels more like home than an old Army bunker. Bunker Hill provides a stocked hunting area along with lodging and a dining area.

outside world — for those who want to.

Some come to forget the outside world, Owen said.

For them, the best part of Bunker Hill is waking up and walking only a few steps to begin their hunt.

Hunters walk among cottonwoods and evergreens. German short-haired pointers detect birds in thick grasses and tops of bunkers. Here, removed from urban development, one hears locusts and quail rather than traffic.

The land contains a mix of enhanced covers, seeded food plots, native grasses and wooded areas. It is bordered by a federal research center, in the middle of the Rainwater Basin renowned for its annual waterfowl migration.

Two professional guides accompany hunters — Rich Faimon of Lawrence and Larry Miller of Nelson. Both are called key to Bunker Hill's success.

They help create the experience

that the Nelsons want Bunker Hill to offer.

Hunting is as much about a shared experience as it is the hunt, Owen said. The Nelson family shares a love of hunting. Their three children, Toby, Chad and Teneil, played a role in creating the resort. Toby currently studies game preserve management at Southeastern Illinois College.

## LEVEL OF SUCCESS

The Nelsons still are surprised how quickly Bunker Hill found success.

National television exposure played a role.

In 1999, footage of an upland bird hunt at Bunker Hill aired on TNN's nationally syndicated "World of Duck's Unlimited Outdoors" program.

It is one reason Bunker Hill's guest book bears comments from hunters across the country, from North Carolina to California.

Some who stand out are the United Airlines pilots who came in

mid-November 2001, with Sept. 11 fresh on their minds.

Others are corporate customers, such as a group from the Anheuser-Busch Co.

They come for one- to three-day package hunts and leave with memories and a framed 8-by-10 photo of the hunters and their harvest of birds.

Steve Hiscock of Silt, Colo., bought a Bunker Hill hunt at a Safari Club International auction.

The Nelsons' knowledge of hunting and conservation — both have hunted around the world — shows in the quality of the operation, he said, particularly in the hatchery and its nutrition program.

"Their birds are the best I've seen out of six hunting clubs in four different states."

The rolling hills of bunkers make fun hunting terrain and allowed nice views of white-tailed deer, he said.

Local hunters such as Bill Starkey

view Bunker Hill as a backyard gem.

To Starkey, Bunker Hill is a place where he can take Hastings Hide Inc. customers for a hunt.

But it's also the kind of place his sons enjoy visiting, he said.

"It really encourages a young person to enjoy the hunting experience. They bend over backward out there where kids are involved," he said, pointing out events such as a Youth Pheasants Forever shoot.

"What's enjoyable about it, out there they take care of all the details."

Guest book comments often mention the hearty meals and the hospitality before the hunting.

"People come as customers and leave as friends," Kim said.

For the Nelsons, there is only one downside to the traffic that turns on the two-mile stretch of road to Bunker Hill. It keeps them busy — too busy for much of anything else.

"We don't get to hunt much anymore," Owen says, smiling.

## Painful: Official says cut is necessary

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"We thought to try to cut all programs across the board would weaken the Institute to the point from which it might never recover," he said.

Owens arrived in Nebraska 19 months ago. After getting off to a good start in Lincoln, he said, he ran into a budgetary buzz saw about a year ago.

"The first six months were wonderful in terms of good university budgets and optimism," he said. "As we all know, the last 12 months have been very, very difficult."

The university saw its budget cut by the Nebraska Legislature first in fall 2001, then again last spring, and most recently at a special legislative session in August. To date, IANR's budget has been cut about \$4 million.

Currently, Owens and Perlman are looking for just more than \$2 million in cuts for the current budget year. Closing South Central would save an estimated \$661,707. This afternoon, Owens was to speak at

another APC public hearing, this time on proposed closure of the veterinary diagnostic laboratory at the West Central Research & Extension Center at North Platte.

In the spring, a similar lab was closed at Scottsbluff, leaving the vet lab in Lincoln as UNL's one and only in the state.

Owens said any cut in the Institute's budget would hurt rural Nebraska and bring complaints, and that all the cuts hurt and frustrated him as the Institute's leader.

He also responded to criticism that while 25 percent of IANR's budget is accounted for by programs and facilities in greater Nebraska, 42 percent of the current proposed cuts are coming from there.

"I need to be crystal clear that in the Institute we do not make decisions about our cuts based on whether they are in Lincoln or outside of Lincoln," he said.

R&E centers help take research at the university and translate it into understandable, usable advice for farmers across the

state. Owens said the University of Nebraska's large-scale commitment to placing tenured faculty in such outposts dwarfed other universities', and was getting hard to support financially.

"Preserving the core of the university is of most long-term benefit to all of Nebraska and all of Nebraskans," he said.

He pledged that the university would not abandon the research on irrigation and water quality for which South Central is known and celebrated.

Owens said he knew many of his Institute colleagues, and people he held in high esteem, disagreed with his decisions about budget cuts to date.

He warned the crowd that additional cuts were likely in the next year, and that they might make prior reductions look minor by comparison.

"These cuts affect every single one of us," he said. "They affect Nebraska's present, and they most certainly affect Nebraska's future."

## Nebraska congressmen support Iraq resolution

### HOUSE, SENATE BACK BUSH

The Associated Press

Nebraska's leaders voted to give President Bush the broad authority he sought to use U.S. military force to confront Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Nebraska's U.S. Sens. Chuck Hagel and Ben Nelson both voted early today with the 77-23 majority to support Bush.

In the House, Nebraska Republican Reps. Doug Bereuter, Lee Terry and Tom Osborne were in the majority as the House voted 296-133 Thursday to back Bush.

Republican Hagel, a decorated

Vietnam veteran, said the risks are too high to avoid the decision.

"We are elected to solve problems, not just debate them. The time has come to chart a new course in Iraq and the Middle East," Hagel said in a release.

Democrat Nelson said Congress and the president have spoken with one voice.

"The message is that it's time for Saddam Hussein to comply with the resolutions for disarmament in order to maintain peace in the region," Nelson said in a statement released through his spokesman David DiMartino.

Because the House and Senate passed the identical resolution, the measure will go directly to President Bush for his signature.