

Agriculture reputation is factor in tractor priority

By Maxine Kubicek

Governor J. James Exon said Wednesday NU's "worldwide reputation as an agricultural university" in part prompted him to give the building of a \$1 million tractor testing facility high budgetary priority.

In his annual State of the State Address and budget presentation Feb. 10, Exon recommended the construction of only three new structures instead of the eight structures proposed in the university budget. Exon said he recommended building the tractor testing building because of its "high priority need."

"Nebraska has not only a national but worldwide reputation of being an agricultural university that all industries look to for tractor testing," he said. "We still are dependent for the most part on our number one industry—agriculture."

Exon said NU approval of a tractor is "akin to the Good Housekeeping seal of approval in consumer products." No tractor that is widely used in Nebraska or in other states is very successful unless it receives the approval of NU, he said.

Martin Massengale, vice chancellor of the UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, also cited NU's international reputation for high standards as a factor in requesting funds for the new building.

"The problem with the old tractor testing facility is that it was built many years ago when farm machinery was much smaller," he said. "We just can't get the new, larger machines inside the facility to test them."

William Splinter, chairman of the Agricultural Engineering Dept., said large tractors weighing 30,000 to 40,000 pounds must be dismantled to get them inside the existing tractor building. Part of the roof of the building is removed to accommodate the tractor once it is reassembled inside, he said.

Splinter said the total budget request of \$3.5 million provides for two phases of renovation: \$1 million to be spent for construction of the new tractor testing building, and \$2.5 million for renovation of the Agricultural Engineering Bldg. The \$3.5 million requested by the NU

Board of Regents has been approved by Exon, Splinter said.

Massengale said the Agricultural Engineering Bldg., built in the early 1900s, is structurally sound but badly needs updating.

If the necessary funds are appropriated by the Legislature, he said, construction of the new tractor testing facility would begin north of the Agricultural Engineering Bldg. within the year. Renovation of the Agricultural Engineering Bldg. would begin next year, he added.

Simmons wants delays eliminated

Robert Simmons, NU Board of Regents chairman, will ask the regents Saturday for a policy to speed the selection of top NU administrators.

In a letter to William Swanson, university lobbyist and corporation secretary to the regents, Simmons said he wanted to eliminate the delays which bogged the search for a new president.

Swanson has declined to comment on the letter saying the regents would discuss the matter Saturday at their meeting.

He did say he thought the presidential search committee worked rapidly and effectively.

"Unfortunately, the people on the list we selected did not come for one reason or another," Swanson said. "The committee goes through all the names carefully. I don't see how they could speed it up, the search committee met their deadline."

Former NU President D. B. Varner announced his resignation last June. Varner became chairman and chief executive officer of the NU Foundation Jan. 1. Former UNO Chancellor Ronald Roskens was appointed interim president to serve until a permanent successor could be named.

Simmons attributed much of the delay to regulations which require that administrative openings be published in academic periodicals before closing the search.

The list of presidential candidates was not submitted to the regents until September because of the publication timetable, Simmons said.

The notice also had to be published again when the committee resumed the search, further delaying the selection, he said.

Simmons proposed that the policy to readvertise in further candidate searches be eliminated and the job notice carry a 30-day application deadline.

Search beginning for champion tree

The search is on for the state's biggest tree.

Neal Jennings, assistant state forester said a study to check the biggest tree in 15 species native to Nebraska will begin around July 1 and will update a 1963 study. Jennings is also a UNL assistant forestry professor and community forestry extension specialist.

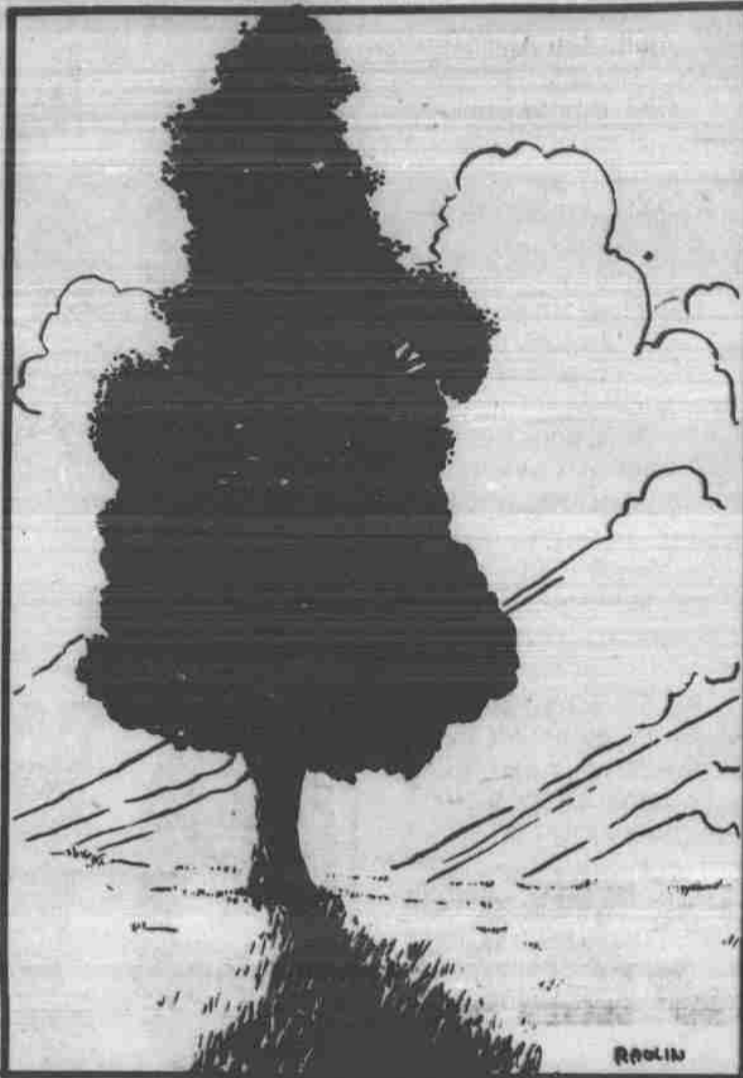
He said the study will be conducted and funded by on-going programs of the University of Nebraska Forestry and Horticulture Departments and the Nebraska State Arboretum Council.

The search will be completed in three stages, he said. First, foresters will recheck 1963's largest trees to see if they are still alive and how large they are now.

After that, foresters and citizens will be able to nominate other trees that were not in the 1963 study and then the actual measuring of the trees will begin.

There is a controversy as to where the biggest tree in Nebraska is, Jennings said. A cottonwood at Arlington is said to be largest, while others claim that a cottonwood at Guide Rock is larger.

"Records show there is the possibility that the tree at Arlington is two trees grown together, he said, "so it has been disqualified this year as the biggest tree."



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