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Excitement added to classes by professor's experiences

By Marita Morris

A UNL economics professor is working with economic projects around the nation because they add the excitement of first-hand, practical experience to the classes he teaches.

Charles Lamphear, who deals "strictly" with economic assessments of certain regions, said university faculty should become involved with outside projects to maintain quality graduate programs.

Lamphear described several of the more than six projects he is involved with.

Lamphear is studying alternatives to well irrigation to deal with a potential shortage of underground water, he said.

An underground lake, which covers six midwestern and southern states, is the target of Lamphear's study.

The lake, called the Aqualla Lake, is made of porous sandstone. He said it is deepest in Nebraska.

The lake provides irrigation water, but the water is used faster than it can be replaced, he said. Texas already has depleted much of its underground water so that it can no longer irrigate, he said.

Lamphear is also impact director of an

oil assessment project on the Gulf Coast. As director, he is surveying the results of an oil spill that occurred 1½ years ago when a wellhead erupted, after which a tanker, the Berma Aget, erupted six weeks later.

The oil came ashore on the Texas coast, causing the need for an extensive impact assessment, he said.

The spill affected not only the shrimp fishing industry and tourism, but also many other aspects of the economy, he said

"You can let your imagination go on how far it will affect. It will include almost everybody down the line," he said.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association is now trying to investigate ways climate affects the economy, such as the Midwestern drought last summer. Other members of the association include representatives from the universities of Oklahoma, Missouri, Delaware, Maryland and Indiana.

In conjunction with the association, Lamphear is an adjunct professor for the University of Oklahoma in helping it expand its economic programs on the effect of climate.

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