

# Professor finds proof asteroid killed dinosaurs

By JIM GOODWIN  
Staff Reporter

David Watkins has discovered that one who digs deep enough just may find what he's looking for.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln geology professor returned in February from a five-week international drilling expedition off the east coast of Florida. The venture yielded evidence that Watkins said is proof the impact of a six- to 10-mile wide asteroid 65 million years ago obliterated the dinosaurs.

Watkins — along with UNL geologist Mary Anne Holmes and UNL graduate student Jean Self-Trail — found the proof 300 feet below the earth's crust in a thin, brownish-yellow layer thought to contain asteroid particles.

Above the particles is a two-inch layer of gray clay, signalling a nearly dead world, Watkins said.

Smatterings of evidence alluding to the theory's accuracy have abounded for decades. However, the expedition's discoveries prove the theory's truth, Watkins said.

"A geological record is like a book," he explained. "Everywhere you go there is a book, but most of the pages are gone. This is the case where all the pages are in the book, in the right order and undisturbed. There is no doubt."

Scientists discovered the asteroid particles about 1,000 miles northeast from the asteroid's point of impact on the northwestern fringe of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

And though there are still skeptics of the asteroid-impact theory, the evidence of a collision Watkins found during his expedition disproves other theories about the dinosaurs' demise, he said.

Watkins said the cataclysm began even before the collision. The asteroid is thought to have trailed a shock

wave created by its 60,000-mph entrance into the Earth's atmosphere. The shock wave sent tidal waves rolling over lands up to 500 miles away, Watkins said.

The asteroid then met rock, instantly vaporizing and ejecting rock particles almost eight miles out of the Earth's atmosphere, Watkins said.

The rock froze, showering the Earth with glass dust. The dust landed on glass pebbles thought to be ocean floor material melted by friction caused by the asteroid's impact.

The event almost instantaneously wiped clean the slate of biological existence, Watkins said.

"This event reset the clock and everything started out differently," he said. "We're talking about two totally different systems and casts of players."

"If you exploded every nuclear device on Earth at once, the force of the asteroid's impact would be 10 times more intense," Watkins said. "It would have been hellacious."

## Lancaster's job market evaluated

By LORI ROBISON  
Staff Reporter

Over the next five years, more than 5,777 new jobs will be created in Lincoln/Lancaster County, according to a survey conducted for the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development.

However, data collected through the Fall 1996 study indicate that many of those jobs will be for technicians, salespeople and office/clerical staff — jobs that typically do not require a four-year degree.

The survey was requested by the LPED to evaluate the present and future job market in Lincoln/Lancaster County. The study targeted businesses that earn more than half their revenues outside the area as well as those who have more than 100 employees, project executive Terri Parsons said. However, many smaller firms — which make up 92 percent of all the local businesses — were also contacted.

The data collected by the Gallup Organization are currently being reviewed by the Workforce Development Council, a division of the LPED. The council's goal will be to develop a rapport with and collaboration among the

private and public business sectors as well as potential employees.

But Parson said that while 70 percent of job openings nationwide do not require a bachelor degree, four-year degrees are far from becoming obsolete.

Development, interpersonal and computer skills will always be important aspects of any job, she said.

With area businesses collaborating with the education community as well as those in the labor market, she said, all aspects of the community will reap the benefits.

"It really is a win-win-win situation," Parson said.

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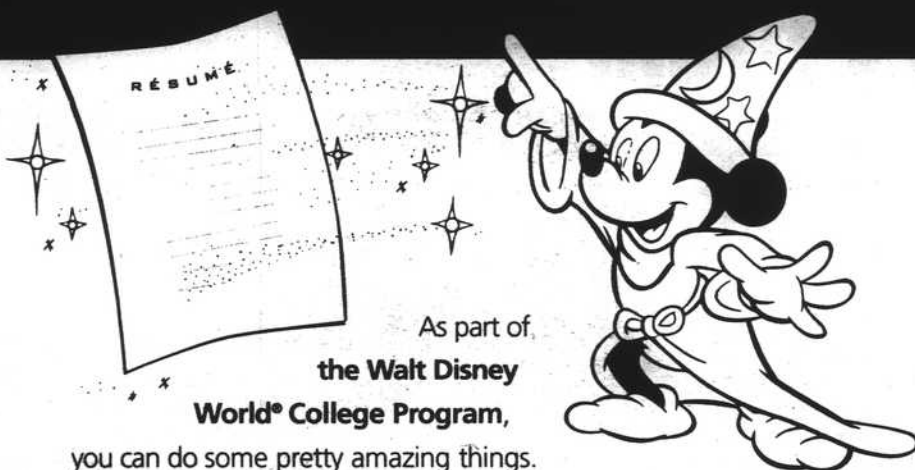
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