

Welcome to Panhandle Extension District Monthly News!

Panhandle Monthly News is a newsletter for Panhandle Extension District staff. It will share information about staff members and their accomplishments, honors, awards, and employment milestones; updates on personnel changes; news about policies; and messages from Jack and the administrative team.

Panhandle Monthly News will provide more space for some of the items that get a brief mention in the

Panhandle Weekly Happenings. It will be attached as a PDF to the Weekly Happenings once a month, and back issues will be archived on the Staff Resources page of the Panhandle Extension website (http://panhandle.unl.edu/staff_resources), where lots of other information can also be found.

To submit an item, make a suggestion, ask a question, etc., contact Dave Ostdiek or Sharon Holman.

Jack's Note

As I write this note, I realize that June 1 marks one year as Director. Wow, it has been an amazing, enjoyable, educational and busy year. I appreciate the opportunity to interact with all of you in your various roles. Thanks for all the support, help and patience you have given me.

Looking back over the last twelve months, we have made great progress in many areas. Thank you for that! I look forward to future years with anticipation of even greater things to come. As I have travelled across the district and the state, I continually hear positive comments about how effective the educators and specialists are in the Panhandle. Thanks for the great jobs you do!

Jack



Adopt-a-School Update

This year we were fortunate to have the Meridian School as our Adopt-a-School partners. The purpose for the program is to build communication between business and education and build the student's knowledge of the business world. Another goal is to enhance educational resources and offer alternatives to traditional classroom learning, assisting in the application of business situations, and providing investments in future leaders. Because of the consistent involvement of our center, we were awarded the Outstanding Adopt-a-School award for the 2014/2015 school year. Next year we will have the opportunity to work with Minatare Public Schools. We are in the process of planning experiences for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. More details will be available in August.

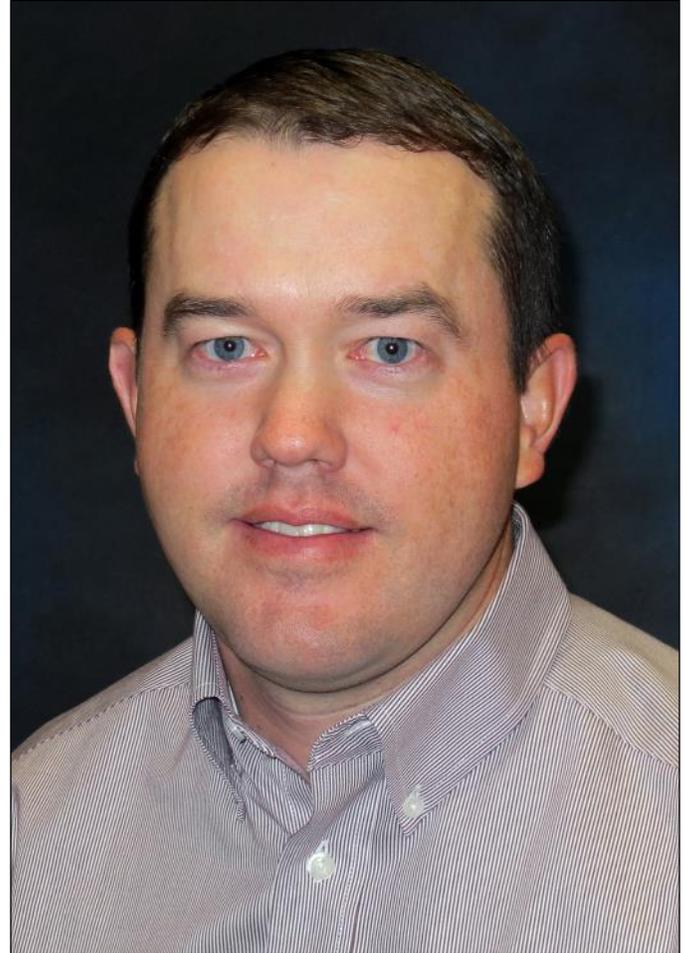
The photo above shows one of this year's activities with Meridian. Panhandle Center staff along with several local organizations recently planted herbs and flowers. *(continued on page 3)*

Staff Profile: Mitchell B. Stephenson, Range / Forage Management Specialist

Background / family: I was born in central Utah and moved to Nebraska when I was 9 years old. I grew up on ranches in western Nebraska and central Wyoming. My parents currently live in Rawlins, WY. I have 4 sisters that live in North Dakota, Wyoming, and Utah.

Education/career: My research and education has focused predominantly on grazing livestock management on rangelands. I received a B.S. degree from BYU-Idaho in Animal Science in 2008. In 2010, I received an M.S. degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Range Science, studying the effect of different grazing methods and time of grazing on vegetation characteristics and livestock performance. Following my M.S. degree, I worked as a rangeland ecologist, where I consulted with and collected range monitoring data for livestock producers in northern NV and western WY. I finished my Ph.D. in August of 2014 at New Mexico State University, where I evaluated the efficacy of targeted cattle grazing methods on vegetation characteristics. Prior to joining UNL, I worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Nevada Reno, where I conducted research on grazing management of cheatgrass.

Hobbies/Interests: Growing up in western Nebraska has given me deep appreciation of Nebraska's diverse and unique rangelands. As a result, I enjoy being out on rangelands observing plants, ecosystems, and wildlife. I also enjoy working with live-



stock and spending time on horseback. When I am not looking at grass and cows, I enjoy hiking, mountain biking, and fly fishing.

Grant Award Notices (via NUgrant):

\$150,000 from U.S. Department of Agriculture-NIFA for a project entitled Identifying Pest Management Solutions for Problematic Western Bean Cutworm Infestations. Lead PI: Julie Peterson. Term of award: May 1, 2015, through April 30, 2018. This is a cooperative program with Kansas. The

long-term goals of our project are 1) to understand factors that are contributing to the inability or perception of an inability to control western bean cutworm in problem areas and 2) provide effective options and knowledge to make sound decisions for western bean cutworm integrated pest management.

Staff Profile: Cody Creech, Dryland Cropping Systems Specialist

Spouse: Married six and a half wonderful years to Natalie. **Children:** Hunter (5), Brooklyn (3), Gage (7 months)

Background/family: I was born in Logan, Utah, and grew up working on my family's dairy farm in Cornish, Utah. Our farm is right next to the Utah-Idaho border, where we raised alfalfa, silage corn, barley, and wheat and milked ~100 cows. Both my mom and dad still work on the farm every day and do the majority of the work. There are nine kids in my family, most still live close to home, and all of us attended Utah State University.

Education/career: After high school, I worked on a dryland wheat farm and installed flooring while earning my undergraduate degree in business and economics. After I earned my degree, I met and married Natalie and decided to go back to school and do a Master's in Plant Science. We landed in North Platte at WCREC to begin my Ph.D. in Agronomy with a specialization in Weed Science with Greg Kruger. Prior to finishing my degree, I was offered the dryland cropping systems specialist position in the Panhandle and couldn't resist working with dryland agriculture again. Nebraska has been good to my family for three years and we hope to be here for many more.

Hobbies/Interests: My spare time and energy is spent with my wife and kids. We try to do things together we all enjoy. We like to play outside and hope to be able to do some camping, fishing, and hunting now that we are more settled. We are looking forward to working on the property we purchased. We are planting a large garden this year and have lots of other landscape projects planned. The kids are excited to have dogs, cats, chickens, horses, and cows. I enjoy farming and hope to be able to purchase a farm



in the future.

Other personal information: Having grown up in the shadows of Utah State University and attending school there, I will always be an Aggie and I follow the football and basketball teams closely. I'm also a Nebraska guy now and hope to be able to attend a few games each year. My first experience attending a game was the Nebraska-Penn St. game two years ago. Nebraska ended up winning and the experience is something I will always remember.

Adopt-a-School (continued from front page)

The Center started seeds in the greenhouse. The planters were made by Rice Construction from cedar lumber donated by Carr-Trumbull Lumber. Aulick TLC donated the potting soil. Around the planter include (clockwise, beginning from lower left) student Patrick Wiggins (back to camera); paraprofessionals

Allison Cushing and Jennifer Wimmer; ESU Director of Special Education Steve Helgeland; Jim Trumbull of Carr-Trumbull; Kelley Rice and Jana Schwartz from Panhandle Research and Extension Center; student Lacey Palmer; and ESU paraprofessionals Melissa Morales and Alexis Morales.

Personnel Updates

OPEN POSITIONS

Panhandle Center

Weeds Specialists – Committee met June 11 to review 11 applications

Dryland Ag Research Technician – Begin interviews

Forage/Range Ag Research Technician – Begin interviews

Panhandle Extension

Box Butte County Learning Child Educator – Letter of Offer sent

Garden-Deuel County 4-H Educator – Review of applications June 30

Scotts Bluff/Morrill Co. Educational & Outreach Associate – Letter of Offer sent

Scotts Bluff Co. Local Project Coordinator – Letter of Offer sent

NEW HIRES

Panhandle Extension

Erika Loy – Extension Assistant-4H in Kimball/Banner County as of June 1. Erika will continue as office manager.

FAREWELLS

Panhandle Extension

Pat Randolph retired May 29 as Local Project Coordinator with Scotts Bluff Co. *(Pat and husband Larry pictured at right)*

Billie McGinley's last day in the Garden County Office is June 12.

Santosh Rajput will receive his Ph.D. in agronomy in August with a specialty in plant breeding and genetics, and has accepted a position as proso millet breeder with Dryland Genetics LLC based in Ames, Iowa. Santosh has been a graduate student under Dipak Santra, based at the Panhandle Center since 2012.



SUMMER STAFF

David Blanke	Dipak Santra	HPAL
Kacie Clark	Matt Luebbe	Feedlot
Brianna Conroy	Matt Luebbe	Feedlot
Samuel Eastman	Bob Harveson	
Abby Ford	Jana Schwartz	
Sinahi Garcia	Jeff Bradshaw	
Emily Garl	Carlos Urrea	
Emily Gill	Rob Higgins	HPAL
Hannah Greenwell	Karla Jenkins	HPAL
Michael Klein	Carlos Urrea	
Kyra Lewis	Erin Kampbell	
Marleny Lopez	Carlos Urrea	
Christopher McCullough	Jeff Bradshaw	
Wesley Morgan	Cody Creech	HPAL
Tyler Patrick	David Reichert	
Kali Robb	HPAL	
Benjamin Shelbourn	Jay Jenkins	Cherry Co
Dawn Sikora	Jeff Bradshaw	
Andrew Thomas	Jeff Bradshaw	
Bernardo Urrea	Bob Harveson	
Jesse Wilson	Carlos Urrea	
Marissa Yonts	Jeff Bradshaw	

After 40 years of service to the University of Nebraska

Gary Hergert

is celebrating his retirement

*Please join him for dinner, June 29, 2015
at the Gering Civic Center*

6:00 pm - Gather & Visit - Honor Bar

6:30 pm - Dinner of Your Choice

Lemon Chicken with Rice Pilaf - \$14.95

Fried Shrimp - \$19.95

Prime Rib - \$28.00

*Served with: Caesar Salad, Baked Potato,
Green Beans Almandine, Rolls & Butter
Coffee & Tea*

Please RSVP by completing this form and returning with your check to Sharon Holman (4502 Avenue I, Scottsbluff 69361) by *Monday, June 22, 2015*.

Please make check payable to "Social Fund".

Number of Guests: _____ Dinner Choice(s): Chicken _____ Shrimp _____ Prime Rib _____

I wish to contribute to a retirement gift for Gary. Amount included in check for gift _____.

We will put together a "Memory Book" if you wish to send/email (sholman1@unl.edu) a letter or photos to Sharon or bring to the dinner. Thank you.

We look forward to seeing you at this special event.