



..... STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

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March 3, 2017 Edition

This past week Nebraska celebrated its 150th anniversary of statehood. 150 years ago, the territory of Nebraska became the 37th state to enter the union. As a matter of fact we were the first state admitted after the Civil War. Gosh it doesn't seem that it was that long ago that we celebrated the Centennial – for you that are not very good at math that was in 1967. As a matter of fact it was the end of my senior year in high school. Maybe it is an omen as the 150th comes as I close out my career as an educator. I guess that really ages me.... Nebraska's Sesquicentennial celebration gives citizens a year-long opportunity to celebrate Nebraska's past and imagine its future. There will be activities all across our state in the coming months. Let's spend a little time talking about Nebraska and its celebration of our statehood in this week's column.

The State Capitol Rotunda was very busy on Wednesday (March 1) this week as state officials and residents of our state gathered to celebrate Nebraska's 150th anniversary of statehood. The day kicked off with the dedication of a statehood "forever" stamp, which features a photograph Sandhill Cranes by Lincoln wildlife photographer Michael Forsberg, who stated that he made the image after building a blind along the banks of the Platte River near Wood River out of local hardware store supplies. His aim was to capture both the cranes and their surrounding habitat, and he did. I for one think it is a very appropriate stamp to signify Nebraska. The stamps were put on sale the same day.

It shouldn't be a surprise, although I have "Nebraska the Beef State" plates on my pickup, that the new logo for Nebraska's Sesquicentennial is a stylized ear of corn. I guess since Iowa's the Hawkeye State...Kansas is the Sunflower State, and technically Nebraska is called the Cornhusker state this is probably a good choice. The use of maize recognizes our state's past and our reputation as the Cornhusker State. Individually the symbols on the logo represent different aspects of our state: The kernels symbolize the seeds of prosperity and agriculture, the backbone of our state; The corn icon resembles an office building as a nod to the business community; The logo is based on decorative elements used throughout the State Capitol; The color is derived from the state flower, the goldenrod.

You maybe didn't know this, but a new license plate honoring Nebraska's 150th anniversary as a state is also available. The Nebraska 150 Sesquicentennial plates were created to commemorate and celebrate the state. The special plates cost \$70 per year, which includes the cost of putting a personal message on the plates if the owner desires. The plates will go on sale Oct. 1 and will be available through the end of 2022. Sale of the plates will benefit the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission and support 150th birthday programs and events across the state. And of course the plate design incorporates the stylized ear of corn logo developed for the sesquicentennial that I describe above.

Of course there is a lot of history that is involved in an event of this magnitude. Governor Ricketts in fact hailed the day as an opportunity for Nebraskans to reflect on the state's history. He recalled a number of notable Nebraska heroes, including Ponca Chief Standing Bear, Boys Town founder Father Edward Flanagan and George Norris, the architect of the State's unique unicameral. Of course anyone who has studied Nebraska History knows that there are many more notable Nebraskans like Lakota Sioux Chief Red Cloud, Willa Cather, Marie Sandoz, Daniel Freeman, Johnnie Carson and so many more who have contributed over the years to making our State – the Good Life! Happy 150th Birthday Nebraska!!

That was reiterated when Governor Ricketts said in his speech - "From the early days when Native Americans roamed the plains in search of buffalo and pioneers broke the prairie sod to build shelter, Nebraska has long been a land of abundance and great opportunity. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate the work of generations of Nebraskans in every community across our state. Their persistence and hard work are what have made Nebraska the Good Life for 150 years!

I suggest going to the website at: <https://ne150.org/>. I think you will find it interesting and educational. Through "Nebraska Impact Initiatives," the "Nebraska 150 Challenge," "I am Nebraska," and "Now You Know Nebraska," citizens of all ages can participate in projects that help them build community, discover their state, and make a difference. "Now You Know Nebraska" will be short videos detailing fun and interesting Nebraska facts and stories. "I am Nebraska" is a challenge to submit "living history" videos of community service. While both projects target elementary and high school students, all can enjoy these projects. There is even a Facebook page that you can access: <https://www.facebook.com/nebraska150/>

Even the Nebraska State Fair is involved in the celebration and have adopted a theme for this year entitled "Celebrate the State: 150". It should be a lot of fun as they are throwing a birthday party for the state that it showcases every year. With a focus on agriculture, education, Nebraska families, fun and statewide pride, the State Fair is the perfect venue to hold Nebraska's 150th birthday bash. "Celebrate the State: 150" is more than just a theme. The State Fair has received a special designation from the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission to become an official event of Nebraska's 150 celebration. I know I am looking forward to this special edition of the Nebraska State Fair.

Speaking of Nebraska history, there is a special edition of a book you should look at procuring, "A History of Nebraska Agriculture: A Life Worth Living" published by The History Press, will come out in early June. American Doorstop Project, Jody L. Lamp and Melody Dobson, were commissioned to create the historical book. You can find more information at <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanDoorstopProject/> or on the web: <http://www.americandoorstopproject.com/>.

The preceding information comes from the research and personal observations of the writer, which may or may not reflect the views of UNL or Nebraska Extension. For more further information on these or other topics contact D. A. Lienemann, Nebraska Extension Educator for Webster County in Red Cloud, (402) 746-3417 or email: dlienemann2@unl.edu or on the web at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/webster>