



May 2016 | Member Newsletter

Phil Kozera

Letter from the Executive Director



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We like to offer congrats to Merck and share upcoming summer activities

Congratulations to Merck Animal Health-Elkhorn, the recipient of the 2016 Governor's Bioscience Award. Governor Ricketts presented the award to Merck Animal Health Vice President of North America Scott Bormann at our annual celebration at TD Ameritrade Park. In his comments, Governor Ricketts applauded Merck for "their contributions to Nebraska's animal-health industry and their willingness to continue investing in research and manufacturing."

Bio Nebraska had a unique opportunity to highlight emerging biotech companies as part of Big Omaha. Thank you to our biotechnology panelists Tyler Martin, Adjuvance Technologies, Luis Lopez, Crumb, Steve Tippery, Intellifarm, and Joshua Sestak, Orion Biosciences. The panelists did an excellent job providing company overviews and detailing the challenges and rewards of being biotech entrepreneurs.

On the legislative front, we are monitoring two federal initiatives. The first is the Renewable Fuel Standard. Recently, the EPA issued the proposed rule for the 2017 Renewable Fuel Standard. It appears that while there is a general increase in all categories, the Agency is still using the same methodology that is a flawed interpretation of EPA's waiver authority to justify the reduction in volumes from statutory levels.

"H.R. 4139 would continue the economic momentum of the JOBS Act by extending this exemption for an additional five years - but only for the smallest companies that do not yet have a product on the market. This is truly an effort to support small businesses in the most innovative of industries."

The second is the Fostering Innovation Act. Under the JOBS Act, newly public small businesses are given a five-year exemption from Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Section 404(b), which can cost growing companies more

than \$1 million annually. H.R. 4139 would continue the economic momentum of the JOBS Act by extending this exemption for an additional five years - but only for the smallest companies that do not yet have a product on the market. This is truly an effort to support small businesses in the most innovative of industries.

Bio Nebraska Board Member Josh Johnson and I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Southeast Community College, including Lynn Willey, placement specialist, and Misty Wehling, professor of biology. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss types of jobs available within the life sciences industry and ways to promote openings.

I'm very excited to announce a new conference that Bio Nebraska is bringing to Omaha July 20. Biotechnology's Role in Emergency Preparedness is a collaboration with Iowa Bio and offers the opportunity to discuss past, current, and future innovative methods of animal disease and outbreak management. For more information, please go to the upcoming events section at www.bionebraska.org.

Lastly, I'd like to promote our upcoming Life Sciences on the Links schedule for June 1 at Iron Horse Golf Club in Ashland. For more information, please contact me at pkozera@bionebraska.org.

Best regards,



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Upcoming Events

-  [Life Sciences on the Links](#)
June 1, 1pm to 6pm
Iron Horse Golf Club, Ashland
-  [BIO International](#)
June 6-9
San Francisco, CA
-  [SBIR Road Tour](#)
June 29
Omaha, NE
-  [Governor's Summit on Econ. Development](#)
July 12
Lincoln, NE
-  [Biotechnology's Role in Emergency Preparedness](#)
July 20th
Sorrell Center, Omaha

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State News

May is renewable fuels month

Ethanol and soy biodiesel provide many economic, environmental and consumer benefits, so Governor Pete Ricketts has proclaimed May renewable fuels month. Nebraska has 25 ethanol plants with the capacity of two billion gallons, which employ more than 1,300 people, and process 700 million bushels of corn a year into ethanol and distiller's grains, a feed for livestock. Some ethanol plants also produce carbon dioxide for bottling and food processing as well as corn oil for food. [Nebraska Corn Board news](#)

Inaugural Streck Award Lecture to honor chemistry pioneer

Professor Kevan M. Shokat, department of cellular and molecular pharmacology, University of California at San Francisco, addressed Non-traditional Chemical Strategies for Targeting Traditional Targets in Cancer and Neurodegeneration at the inaugural Streck Award Lecture at UNL. This public/private partnership between Streck and the UNL department of chemistry will each year bring a leader in clinical chemistry/chemical biology to the state. [Streck news](#)

Transgenomic launches new liquid biopsy for metastatic breast cancer

Unveiling its new Breast Cancer Analysis Panel at the 2016 American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting, Transgenomic President and CEO Paul Kinnon said: "Metastatic breast cancer is expected to cause almost 41,000 deaths in the U.S. this year. Promising new breast cancer drugs include targeted therapies aimed at the PIK3CA and AKT1 genes that are mutated in about 30% of breast cancer patients. We are pleased to announce the imminent launch of our Breast Cancer Analysis Panel, which uses our unique Multiplexed ICE COLD-PCR technology to detect key mutations in these genes from an ordinary blood sample at very high sensitivity." Notably, results will be available in 7-10 days compared to up to four weeks for other tests. [Transgenomic news](#)

Federal grant program hits the road

There is \$2.5 billion in federal SBIR/STTR grants available. An upcoming "road show" will help researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs learn how to tap into the opportunities. The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs are managed through federal agencies. About a dozen will be on hand in Omaha on June 29, 7:30 am to 3 pm at UNO's College of Business Administration. The event is free but registration is required. [UNeMed](#)



UNMC's Rongshi Li, (left) meets Niall O'Donnell of VC firm RiverVest at summit.

Partnering summit off to an encouraging start

UNeMed's first-ever Industry Partnering Summit encouraged officials toward making the event a regular offering in future years. "We had 10 UNMC technologies on display, and several of the companies have expressed interest in learning more about them," said UNeMed's CEO Michael Dixon. The event attracted venture capital and industry representatives. [UNeMed](#)

New CEO at Invest Nebraska

Dan Hoffman was permanently promoted to CEO at Invest Nebraska Corporation's board of directors on April 12. Hoffman was Invest Nebraska's COO until March when then-CEO Mark Crawford resigned to take a position with Intel Capital in California. Invest Nebraska is a nonprofit organization using public and private funds to invest in Nebraska-based businesses. Since 2002, Invest Nebraska has made 41 seed investments in state businesses. [UNeMed](#)

NU recognizes top teachers, researchers

Bio-related tech fields were represented among prestigious teaching and research awards announced by NU President Hank Bounds. The university-wide awards recognize significant impact. “Our talented faculty are some of the University of Nebraska’s greatest assets. Whenever I spend time in their classrooms, labs and fields, I walk away even more excited about what the university is doing to serve students, our state and the world,” Bounds said. NU News. Among the honored are:



Teaching: Neal Grandgenett, George and Sally Haddix community chair, College of Education, UNO. Grandgenett teaches courses in data-driven decision making and STEM learning methods. His efforts have engaged thousands of teachers in efforts like learning with educational robotics and wearable technologies. A 27-year veteran of UNO, he has authored more than 130 papers on STEM education and has worked on \$18 million in federal grants, including 10 National Science Foundation grants.



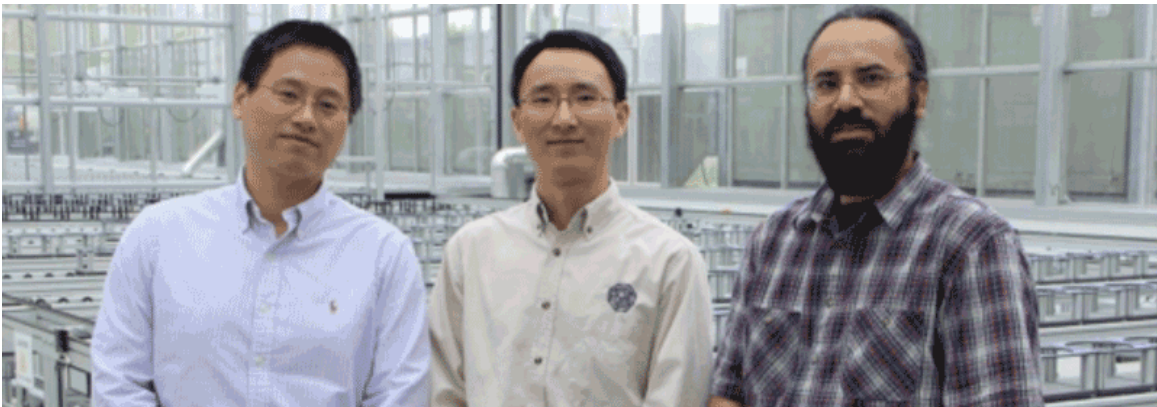
Research: Surinder Batra, chair and professor in the department of biochemistry and molecular biology and the Stokes-Shackelford distinguished professor, College of Medicine, UNMC. Batra has helped make the medical center’s pancreatic cancer research a leading program. His lab has cloned and patented genes studied for pancreatic cancer diagnosis and therapy. He has published more than 360 papers and received several U.S. patents.



Engagement: Elliott Ostler, Paul Kennedy professor of educational leadership, UNO. Ostler’s vision of reinventing STEM instruction has led to patented math-teaching tools and a business called the Initiative for Instructional Inventions and Solutions, distributing 11,000 of his teaching instruments and training more than 1,000 math teachers.



Engagement: Matt Waite, professor, College of Journalism and Mass Communications, UNL. Waite founded the drone journalism lab where students have used drones to report news in six countries on three continents. He also teaches courses in data journalism, storytelling and technology. He developed PolitiFact, a St. Petersburg Times website that fact checks politicians, the first website awarded the Pulitzer Prize.



UNL researchers are improving high-throughput plant phenotyping.

NSF grant to support development of new phenotyping instrument
Laser instruments at UNL will probe plant chemistry while measuring 3D plant structure to speed crop improvement, said Yufeng Ge, department of biological systems engineering. UNL is leveraging its cutting-edge Greenhouse Innovation Center. Other researchers involved with the three-year \$534,000 National Science Foundation grant are Hongfeng Yu, department of computer science and engineering, and Harkamal Walia, department of agronomy and horticulture. [UNL News](#)



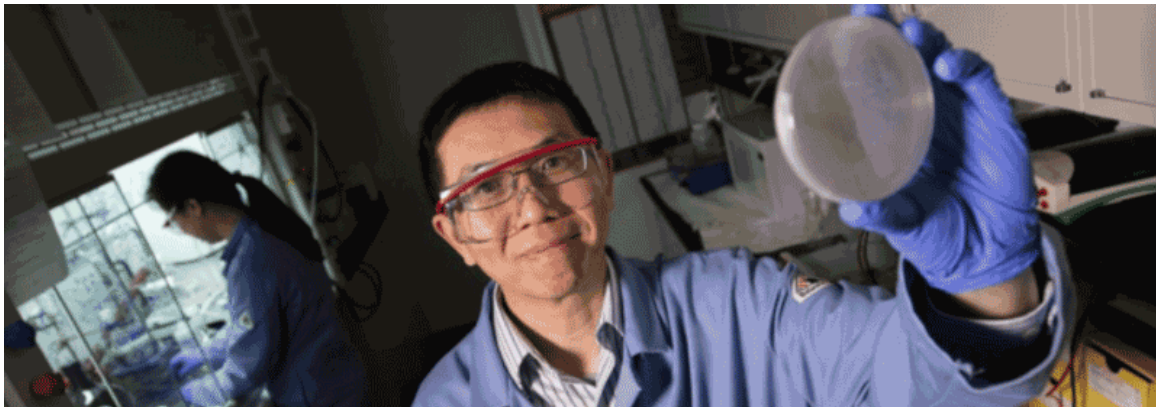
New UNL nano facility aims to be regional hub of collaborative research.

Nano-engineering facility opens
UNL held an open house for its nano-engineering research facility at the Voelte-Keegan Nanoscience Research Center. The shared-user facility offers state-of-the-art equipment, in-house design, nanoscale manufacturing and nanoscopic study. Joseph Turner, professor of mechanical and materials engineering,

said “it is the intent of this facility to become a regional hub for nano-engineering of materials and devices.”

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[News](#)



Jiantao Guo is using DNA research to improve protein manufacturing.

[NSF grant supports chemist's work on protein synthesis](#)

Altering proteins for medical, agricultural and other benefits typically means sticking to nature's building blocks. A UNL chemist envisions expanding the genetic coding ability of DNA to create new possibilities for research and commercial applications. Jiantao Guo, department of chemistry, obtained a five-year, \$622,320 National Science Foundation award to further work on a promising new method for incorporating new amino acids into proteins. [UNL News](#)



Ali S. Khan releases [The Next Pandemic](#), a new book on his experiences.

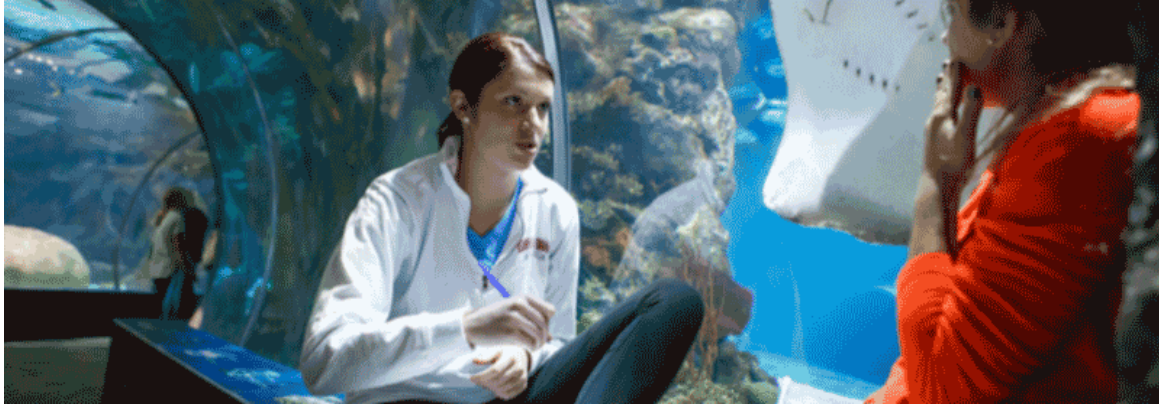
[New book on pandemic threats](#)

The adventures of Ali S. Khan, dean of the UNMC College of Public Health, come to life in his new book, [The Next Pandemic: On the Front Lines Against Humankind's Gravest Dangers](#), about containing the world's deadliest diseases, including:

- 1995 Ebola outbreak in Zaire
- 2001 anthrax in the Senate Office building
- 2002 SARS in Singapore
- 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak
- Khan's 20 years at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

[UNMC](#)

[News](#)



[New program unites Omaha STEM community to enhance learning opportunities.](#)

[Henry Doorly, UNO lead STEM learning initiative](#)

The Omaha Citywide STEM Ecosystem, led by Henry Doorly and UNO, along with 30 other organizations, was selected as one of the 10 national STEM learning centers. "STEM education is one of UNO's academic priority areas and we couldn't be happier to partner with organizations like Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium to educate students of all ages across the city and across the state," said Neal Grandgenett, UNO. [UNO News](#)

[NPPD builds classroom lab for STEM education](#)

Nebraska Public Power District new STEM Connections Lab is a portable lab that connects work force skills with educational requirements, said Chad Johnson, educational specialist with NPPD. The lab, paid for through a \$30,000 American Public Power Association grant and matching funds, will launch in the fall at 15 different schools in the state. [Columbus Telegram](#)

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[National News](#)

[Neogen adds to its roster of acquisitions](#)

Neogen has purchased several companies, expanding its presence in key industries. Acquired were Preserve International and Tetradyne LLC, which offer livestock and food-processing cleaners, disinfectants and associated products. The company also acquired Deoxi Biotecnologia Ltda, an animal genomics lab in Brazil, the world's largest cattle producer. [Neogen news](#)

[Bayer seeks to purchase Monsanto](#)

Monsanto Company disclosed that it has received an unsolicited, non-binding proposal from Bayer AG for a potential acquisition of Monsanto, subject to due diligence, regulatory approvals and other conditions. Monsanto has rejected the first bid, which would create the world's largest agro-chemical company. Both companies have Nebraska connections. [NY Times](#)

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