

*"My name is Paul Hosford and my wife Lori and I live in the rural community of Albion. Albion has a population of around 1700 people and is located about an hour from the larger communities of Grand Island, Norfolk and Columbus.*

*Founded in 1871 Albion is, like many small towns, struggling to survive in a world much different than the early pioneers could have anticipated. Albion was originally intended to be an agrarian and mercantile hub, a place where farmers could sell their produce and buy both necessities and luxuries. Today, however, there are far fewer farmers and the hubs of commerce have shifted to the larger communities I mentioned above.*

*Albion is currently in the midst of a "comprehensive planning process", a process intended to envision the Albion of decades to come and chart a course for realizing that vision -- an Albion adapted to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century. For Albion to not only survive but prosper in the decades ahead we must "repioneer" the future, bringing to bear many of the same visionary ideals that inspired and sustained the original pioneers. Because Albion faces a much different future than the pioneers faced -- a future that will present the challenges of a changing climate, the end of fossil fuels, the need for major changes in agriculture -- we are reaching beyond our community in the hope of forming partnerships with young people such as yourselves, inviting you to join with us so that we may work together towards creating a sustainable future.*

*It is the need for sustainability that lies at the heart of our vision -- we must be able to sustain ourselves within a fragile, temperamental and damaged environment. Where the pioneers raised buildings as an act of defiance -- they were standing tall in the face of blizzards, droughts and even swarms of locusts by building structures in the style of the East -- we must re-envision our approach to building. Instead of conquering our environment, we must form a symbiosis with it, find ways to heal and sustain it as well as ways for it to sustain our lives by utilizing its gifts of sun and wind to heat and cool our buildings.*

*My wife Lori and I believe that your professor, Martin Despang, is a true pioneer in the field of Eco-Architecture, and from what he has told us about many of you, that you similarly possess both the vision and the passion to leave your marks on the world. We would thus greatly appreciate it if you would consider partnering with our community to help us reach a sustainable, ecofriendly tomorrow.*

*While perhaps not the most glamorous of locations, Albion is a warm and open community with a surprising diversity of people, talents and enterprises, a community with a strong sense of purpose. And that purpose is to build good lives, good families and set a course for the future that will hopefully serve as a model for other small communities to follow.*

*We offer you the opportunity to work with us "hands on" to realize our visions of a thriving and sustainable community. We also offer you the opportunity to share your visions with us, an opportunity to realize your visions and begin your careers here and now in what is figuratively your "own back yard" -- rural Nebraska. We appreciate you considering our offer to bring your creativity, passion and talent to help us better realize our potential and in the processes, redefine what rural America can become -- a vital, forward-thinking, sustainable and environmentally-sensitive place with high quality-of-life for people to live in, work in and raise their families.*

*We are determined to successfully "pioneer" tomorrow, and would be honored if you would consider joining us."*