



Architecture students back in Boone County

Professor Martin Despang's fourth-year architectural students visited the community of St. Edward last Friday. The students were treated to a meal and then learned more about St. Edward at the library before touring the community. The students will be working in the communities of St. Edward, Petersburg and Albion this semester to design innovative and energy-efficient public buildings.



Thirteen University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) fourth year architectural students visited Friday in St. Edward. As a class project, the students are working on designing a Community Center for St. Edward.

Previously, fifth year architectural students designed buildings for Albion.

This Boone County project came about from a chance meeting between Paul and Lori Hosford of Albion and Martin Despang, Associate Professor in the UNL Department of Architecture. While the Hosfords

visited with Mr. Despang, the Re-Pioneering Boone County Project took shape and became a reality.

The students will work to design something unique for St. Edward, with the community's guidance. Normally, an architectural firm would charge between \$50,000 and \$100,000 for their services. But, as a class project and with the permission of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Engineering, the designs are free.

Pictured are the students,

with their hometowns listed, who visited the community. From the left, front row, Anthony Colman of Lincoln, Casey Painter of Springview, Aaron Wong of El Paso, Texas, Craig Weflen of Sioux Falls, South Dakota; middle row, Michelle Morehead of Bellevue, Sean Cobb of Lincoln, Tyson Fiscus of Coleridge, Benton Cooper of York; back row, Seth Carlock of Hamburg, Iowa, Alex Stotz of Elkhorn, Lucas Fiegen of Sioux Fall, South Dakota, Parker Edick of Omaha, Ben Hovland of Yankton.

Build and they will come

"I think people would leave cities in droves," a software engineer from Omaha remarked to me over the weekend. We were discussing rural redevelopment and the partnership efforts between communities in Boone County and the UNL College of Architecture to "repioneer" our area for the 21st Century. He felt such an approach could attract many people tired of the hassles of city life.

Although not a developer or an architect, he is a good example of the sort of new resident rural areas could foreseeably attract, so it was reassuring to hear his ideas about working from home in a rural community rather than in a cubicle in a city.

Rural communities face many challenges but they also possess many attributes, including high quality of life. In rural communities you don't have to worry about traffic or much about crime. I remember a cousin from Los Angeles expressing amazement that strangers here wave. In L.A., he said, everyone is assumed to be an enemy.

Many people who work in the high tech sector only need a computer and a high speed Internet connection to function, so there really is no reason they can't work from rural communities -- some already do. These people bring their jobs with them, thereby sidestepping the relative lack of job opportunities in rural areas.

Most jobs in rural areas are either directly or indirectly connected with agribusiness, and as a result are buffeted periodically by downturns in commodity markets and/or weather conditions. But people working via the Internet would be mostly immune from the ups and downs of the ag economy, thus providing a stabilizing force for our local economies.

But in order to attract these workers, to motivate them to actually make a major lifestyle change, rural communities need to actively pursue them. And one way to do this is by thinking about the amenities these high tech workers enjoy in the cities.

One amenity is the profusion of shopping opportunities. One need only drive down Center Street in Omaha to see the endless repetition of similar stores every few miles. Rural communities are never going to be able to compete in that regard.

Yet while talking with Bernie, the software engineer I mentioned at the beginning of this column, he mentioned that today shopping malls are struggling to survive. He said he feels more and more people are losing interest in the prevailing

urban retail approach, an approach that inundates consumers with glitzy products that in most cases aren't really needed.

Good health care and good education are important to everyone. Fortunately, Albion excels in both areas. But good health extends beyond quality medical care. Young professionals are particularly concerned with "wellness" -- staying healthy and avoiding the need for medical attention. One way of doing this is through regular exercise; Albion is again fortunate to have a great fitness center. But another fitness avenue that appeals to many people is outdoor walking/biking. Boone County actually has some wonderful hiking areas, especially along the Beaver Creek.

If an easily accessible trail system could be developed, this would make our area more attractive to both visitors and people looking to relocate.

Another aspect of wellness is eating healthy, locally produced food. Since they don't have to be shipped

great distances or stored, locally produced meats and vegetables are less processed and generally fewer chemicals or drugs are used in their production. Encouraging more local food production and establishing a farmers market and/or partnerships with local grocers is another way rural communities could improve their attractiveness to urban professionals. (Currently a UNL graduate student is designing a subterranean greenhouse to affordably produce vegetables and even some fruits year-round in our climate, and one of the first-semester students designed a companion year-round farmers market for downtown Albion.)

Concern for the environment is also important to many of these urban workers. By working with the UNL College of Architecture to utilize the sun, wind and earth to help meet our energy needs, we are sending a strong message to a new generation of eco-conscious professionals that we are serious about reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and protecting the environment.

But more than that, the UNL students' designs would complement even the most cosmopolitan city. Incorporating these innovative, beautiful and eco-friendly designs into our communities would send a powerful and immediate visual message that we are leading the way in re-visioning ourselves as diversified and viable communities -- communities that are as forward-thinking as any city while at the same time preserving traditional quality of life.

"Rural communities face many challenges but they also possess many attributes, including high quality of life."



INFORMAL REVIEW -- Students show designs for a new community center in St. Edward.

Architecture students present St. Edward designs

An informal review of UNL professor Martin Despang's second semester students' designs for a new gathering place in St. Edward was presented Friday, Feb. 12, at the College of Architecture in Lincoln.

This event featured a dozen unique, eco-friendly and affordable ideas for a multi-purpose facility intended to meet a variety of community needs. Attending were people from St. Edward and Albion, as well as active and retired architects and professors, including this year's Hyde Chair professor Brian Andrews of Los

Angeles and visiting lecturer Jack DeBartolo of Phoenix.

Francis Whidden of St. Edward remarked that he was "impressed with the diversity of the plans. Each student had a unique design based on some aspect of our community that they chose as a source of inspiration."

His wife, Virginia, commented that the review was "very impressive -- it was evident that each of the students had a great deal of passion for their creation."

Professor Despang's fourth year students are building on the

"re-pioneering" work started in the fall semester by a group of fifth and sixth year students.

This semester's students will also explore a possible Performing Arts Center for Albion and a new grocery store for Petersburg. At the end of the semester, their designs for all three communities will be displayed in the Wells Fargo Bank in Lincoln before being brought to the respective communities for residents to examine.

Anyone having questions may contact Paul or Lori Hosford at 402-395-6727.

Boone County Development Agency Newsletter

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UNL Architecture Project

The UNL College of Architecture is once again working with communities in Boone County to help pioneer this area for the 21st Century. This semester a new group of fourteen 4th year students are working on projects intended to address additional needs in three of the Boone County communities.

The UNL students began their semester-long Boone County studio by designing a new gathering place for St. Edward. Intended to be affordable, energy-efficient and to use locally available material, this building would replace the existing community center and provide a flexible space for meetings, receptions, craft fairs, and concerts.

The students are presently working on designs for a joint school/community Performing Art Center in Albion. Although Boone Central currently has no plans for building an auditorium, the students' designs could provide a starting point for wider discussion on the feasibility for

such a facility.

The semester will conclude in Petersburg where the students will develop designs for an eco-friendly grocery store and warehouse.

All of the semester's designs will be put on display in the lobby of the Wells Fargo Bank in Lincoln at the end of the spring semester. The designs will then be brought to Boone County for people here to examine.

The designs from the first semester are currently on display in the former Scrapbook Paradise building in Albion. Anyone wishing to view them may contact Paul or Lori Hosford at (402) 395-6727.

Lori Hosford listens to Architecture student, Casey Painter, explain his ideas for a Community Gathering Place for St. Edward at a project review held on Friday, February 12th.



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Architecture students to present work

Architecture students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will be presenting their models and design ideas in St. Edward and Albion this Saturday, March 27.

The first presentation of models and ideas for a new community center/gathering place for St. Edward will be held at 10 a.m. in the St. Edward Community Center.

The second presentation, on a possible new performing arts center for Albion, will be held at 1 p.m. in the multi-purpose gym at Boone Central Public School.

These are two of the three projects the third and fourth-year architecture students are working on in Boone County this semester. Their third project is to design a new grocery store for the Petersburg community.

The St. Edward Advance

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Thursday, April 1, 2010



As part of the fourth year Architectural Design Studio, 13 students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln developed plans for a new St. Edward Community Center. Twelve of the students and their instructor, Martin Despang, brought their design boards and models to

town last Saturday to show the community.

The open house at the Community Building was well attended. It provided an insight into the design process, inspiration for the concept and the types of building materials

used. As one onlooker stated, "It's not often that you can get this many unique designs for free."

The design models will be on display on a rotational basis the next few weeks in both banks and the library in St. Edward.

UNL students show design ideas in St. Edward, Albion

UNL third and fourth year architecture students, along with Professor Martin Despang, returned to Boone County to display their work to the public last Saturday, March 27.

Their first stop was the St. Edward Community Center, to show designs for a new community gathering place.

Many area residents moved among the displays as students explained their ideas for design, location and construction materials. Three possible sites were used for this facility, one on Beaver Street to replace the existing community center, one in the north

part of town near the school and park, and another in the northeast corner of town.

In the afternoon, the students displayed designs for a possible new performing arts center on the southeast corner of the Boone Central School grounds in Albion.

These concepts varied widely, and included subterranean and above ground, with seating for 450 to 600 people and special consideration for energy efficiency.

The students' next project will be to design a grocery store and warehouse for the Petersburg community.

Architecture students present designs at St. Edward, Albion



In St. Edward last Saturday morning, State Sen. Kate Sullivan visits with UNL architecture professor Martin Despang about designs for a new community center.



UNL architecture student Craig Weflen discusses his performing arts center design with Kay Erickson and Angela Hosford.



VIEWING STUDENT DESIGNS -- Larry and Radene Temme, owners of Rae Valley Market in Petersburg, look over student designs for a possible new building to house their store.

UN-L architectural students complete semester with Petersburg designs

Residents of Petersburg and Albion joined active and retired architects, architectural professors and other guests in Lincoln's old City Hall on April 28, 2010 to review innovative and eco-friendly designs for a new grocery store/grocery warehouse in Petersburg.

The designs were created by third- and fourth-year students from the UNL College of Architecture. They are intended to be affordable, energy-efficient and to utilize locally available materials.

Under the direction of German eco-architect and UNL professor Martin Despang, 13 student architects have spent the past semester developing designs for a new food center in Petersburg, along

with a community gathering place in St. Edward, and a possible school/community performing arts center in Albion.

These students continued the "re-pioneering" work started in the fall when Despang's 15 fifth- and sixth-year students developed 45 designs for downtown Albion.

The performing arts center and grocery store designs are currently on display in the lobby of the Wells Fargo Bank building in downtown Lincoln. Later this month, the models will be brought to Boone County for area residents to view.

Anyone having questions may contact project coordinators, Paul and Lori Hosford, at 402-395-6727.



UN-L ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS, Albion project coordinators and teacher involved in the re-pioneering efforts in Petersburg, St. Edward and Albion included: (front, l. to r.) Michelle Morehead, Katie Johnston, Aaron Wong, Tyson Fiscus, Benton Cooper, Seth Carlock, and Sean Cobb. (back) Lori Hosford, Casey Painter, Professor Despang, Paul Hosford, Alex Stotz, Craig Weflen, Lucas Fiegen, Ben Hovland, and Parker Edick.

Photo by Shannon Landauer.

County Continues Green Development

ALBION, Neb. - Boone County is greening up, and it isn't just because it's spring. Energy-saving designs created by students at the UNL College of Architecture are brightening the future of this rural northeast Nebraska county by introducing it to "green" building techniques.

The students' designs are intended to help revitalize rural communities, cut energy costs and attract young people back to rural Nebraska. As eye-catching as they are innovative, the designs are currently on display in the lobby of the Wells Fargo Center at 1248 'O' St. in Lincoln.

Going "green" is nothing new in Boone County. In 2007 a 110 million gallon ethanol plant came on line. Though temporarily idled by financial concerns shortly afterwards, the plant is now operating at full capacity and employs 60 people. An 80 megawatt wind farm located east of Petersburg should be producing power by the end of this year, and a second 40.5 MW plant will become operational in 2011.

But renewable energy is just one facet of green technology. Cutting energy costs for heating and cooling buildings is another important area of green development and can often be accomplished with passive techniques. For help with this Boone County turned to the UNL College of Architecture.

Thirteen 3rd- and 4th- year students under the direction of German eco-architect/professor Martin Despang have spent the past semester partnering with communities in Boone County to help them "re-pioneer" themselves to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Continuing the work started last fall when Professor Despang's 5th- and 6th- year students designed 45 new buildings/building renovations for Albion, these designs are intended to be affordable, energy efficient and to utilize locally-available building materials.

All of the designs incorporate passive solar techniques to reduce heating costs. The south sides are mostly glass and the interiors utilize concrete to store the heat of the winter sun. This concrete "thermal mass" re-radiates heat at night, helping reduce energy needs.

In the summer overhangs and/or vines shade the glass panels, helping to keep the buildings cooler. When possible, buildings are built into the earth to provide insulation and block exposure to the north wind. One design even allows winter air to be used to reduce the energy needed for food refrigeration.

While sustainability is important, the buildings need to meet a variety of community needs. Professor Despang's students visited communities in Boone County and researched their histories. Professor Despang's intention was to have his students design from the perspective of a community resident so their designs would not only fit well with the existing buildings but also introduce young people's perspectives into the community development process.

Over the course of the spring semester the UNL students met with groups of citizens in Boone County to discuss the need for a new community gathering place in St. Edward, a performing arts center for both school and community use in Albion, and a new grocery store/warehouse in Petersburg. Each student then designed a building and constructed an intricate scale model of his or her design.

At the end of May when the Wells Fargo display is completed, the models will be brought to Boone County for people there to examine.

Boone County Development Agency director Shannon Landauer feels "the partnership with UNL has been a great experience for Boone County. These new ideas have pushed us to look beyond traditional building methods and think about sustainable approaches, which will likely influence other projects in each of our communities." Landauer added that she has enjoyed getting to know the students, several of whom are from rural communities, and hopes a permanent partnership with the College of Architecture can be established.

"As long as we are willing to open up our minds," Landauer said, "the benefits of green technology will continue to help our area grow."

41st District State Senator Kate Sullivan of Cedar Rapids, whose district includes Boone County, was amazed with the innovative ideas the students developed. "Sometimes all that is needed to move an idea forward is to put it in a tangible form. That's what the students have done in their models. I'm confident we'll eventually see some physical results. This is truly a path to building our future in Boone County."

My Side of the Fencepost

By Jim Dickerson

Ahead of his time

Maybe it's the ultimate compliment to say that someone was "ahead of his time."

Those words are used quite often when architecture buffs talk about Frank Lloyd Wright.

Julie, her brother Dan and I were in the midst of architecture enthusiasts last weekend. We traveled to Chicago to attend the Frank Lloyd Wright Plus Tour.

I certainly don't consider myself an authority on architecture, but I do appreciate the designs of Wright -- especially when you consider that much of his most important work was totally different than the prevailing popular styles at the turn of the 20th Century. His buildings still appear very modern today.

He blazed new trails as an architect, interior designer, writer and educator.

Wright promoted natural settings and organic architecture. His unique style, called Prairie style, was revolutionary for its time. Most of us are familiar

with Wright's more famous buildings, such as Fallingwater, Robie House and others -- including the famous Guggenheim Museum in New York City. He also designed furnishings and art glass windows for his buildings in his own distinctive style.

In short, Wright was a non-conformist, but his work left a lasting impression. His Prairie style architecture was a complete

departure from the surrounding brightly colored Victorian houses of the time. His effort was to make a building appear to rise from its natural surroundings. His signatures included hidden entrances, strong horizontal lines and banded windows.

Wright was an early "eco-architect." He emphasized natural building materials and using design to help in heating and cooling his buildings.

We have heard that *eco-architect* term in Boone County before, of course, with Professor Martin Despang and his students designing buildings here during the past year.

Unfortunately, we have learned that next year Professor Despang will be moving away to take a teaching position in Arizona; but we are hopeful that the University of Nebraska College of Architecture will continue its connection with rural Nebraska and Boone

County in particular.

The *re-pioneering* project, started by Professor Despang and Paul and Lori Hosford, shows tremendous promise for rural communities.

This project blazes a new trail of thought for both architecture and rural development. It might be considered by some to be ahead of its time. I prefer to believe it represents a leading edge.

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UNL architecture displays available at three locations

Architecture displays for Boone County projects, completed by UNL architecture students last semester, are available for public viewing at several locations.

Designs for a possible future performing arts center at Boone Central High School can be viewed in the Commons Area near the east entrance of the high school.

Designs for a possible future grocery store at Petersburg can be seen in the Petersburg State Bank lobby.

Designs for a future St. Edward Community Center can be seen in the St. Edward Public Library.