

Butterfly Ranch Wins Edge Program Top Business Plan

LINCOLN, Neb. -- A Sandhills woman who plans to raise butterflies claimed first place honors in the 1997 Nebraska EDGE Coalition Best Business Plan competition.

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension program helps Cornhusker State residents develop or expand small businesses. The 40-hour EDGE course offers practical guidance on entrepreneurial skills, including preparing financial statements, designing marketing plans and development business plans, said Marilyn Schlake, Program Coordinator of NU's Center for Rural Community Revitalization and Development.

Dorothy Davis of Thedford has owned businesses before. But the EDGE program *"taught me about researching the market,"* she said. Her company, The Butterfly Ranch Inc., will market monarch butterflies east of the Rocky Mountains to research centers and other outlets such as bridal stores, which promote distributing butterflies at weddings instead of rice. Davis plans to open the butterfly nursery in 1999 after her daughter, Casey Lehman of Lincoln, earns a doctorate degree in agronomy from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In the future, Davis said she wants the company to reproduce endangered butterfly species, with hope of releasing them into the wild in cooperation with government regulators.

Marty and Karen Bredthauer, owners of the Straight Arrow Bison Ranch at Broken Bow, placed second in the competition. They used their EDGE business plan to develop ways to market bison in central Nebraska.

"The course helped us focus our goals and develop some strategies," Karen Bredthauer said.

Roger and Kay Morrill, owners of R & K Motor Parts at Creighton, placed third. The EDGE course paved the way for getting loans the couple needed to construct a new building for their expanding business.

"By having the business plan put together, we were able to get loans more quickly," Kay Morrill said. *"It showed the financial institutions how serious we were."*

More than 800 entrepreneurs have participated in EDGE since it began in 1993 as the Nebraska Fast Trac Program. In 1996, the program upgraded and is now called the Nebraska EDGE (Enhancing, Development and Growing Entrepreneurs.)

The US WEST Foundation and the Western Entrepreneurial Network at the University of Colorado-Denver produce \$1,000 for the awards.

Funding for EDGE comes from the US WEST Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and NU Cooperative Extension in NU's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

For more information, call a local extension office or Marilyn Schlake at (402) 472-4138.

For more information contact:

[Marilyn Schlake](#), Program Coordinator
58 F Filley Hall Lincoln, NE 68583-0947
1.800.328.2851 or 1.402.472.4138