

Broken Bow Bison Ranch Wins Honor

GRAND ISLAND - In 1994, Marty and Karen Bredthauer of Broken Bow began raising bison as an alternative to raising cattle on their 320-acre ranch. They sold their first bison meat the next year.

Today, their Straight Arrow Bison Ranch is home to about 60 head of bison, a growing regional business, and an award-winning business plan.

The Straight Arrow Bison Ranch has placed first in the Nebraska EDGE Program and the NxLevel Training Network 1999-2000 Best Business Plan Contest.

The Bredthauers developed their business plan after taking "Tilling the Soils of Opportunity," an EDGE agricultural entrepreneur course offered in Broken Bow, said Marilyn Schlake, Nebraska EDGE coordinator at the University of Nebraska's Center for Applied Rural Innovation.

In the late 1990s, the couple enrolled in a NxLevel Training Network course that Karen Bredthauer said "helped us to formulate our goals." Following up later with the "Tilling the Soils" class provided an opportunity to focus marketing strategies, she said.

"I'd recommend it to anyone, whether they're starting an ag-related business or whether they want to become more efficient in their business," Bredthauer said.

The Straight Arrow Bison Ranch is a family business that markets bison meat directly to Broken Bow, Grand Island, Kearney, North Platte and McCook, sells bison meat wholesale to a Kearney grocery store and sells bison meat via a company Internet site.

The business will receive a \$500 first prize from NxLevel Training Network, which sponsored this statewide contest for the best three business plans submitted by Nebraska EDGE graduates between Sept. 1, 1999 and Aug. 1, 2000.

Other Nebraska businesses placing in the contest, owner's names, hometown, prizes, the name of the EDGE course they attended and its location are:

Second place -- E.D. Angus, a seedstock cattle operation; Clint and Suzy Hebbert of Ashby; \$300; "Tilling the Soils of Opportunity," agricultural entrepreneur course, Ogallala.

Third place -- Bev's Bakin' and Bev'rage, a proposed bake shop and cafe; Beverly Schwindt of Creighton; \$200; Entrepreneurs course, Creighton/Neligh.

The awards were announced this week at a Nebraska EDGE conference in Grand Island.

Four other EDGE award winners and their businesses were honored at the luncheon. They are:

-- Faith Jones, CrossRoads Psychotherapy Centre, Lincoln, 2000 Edge Start-up Business of the Year.

-- John Plucknett, president, Adams Bank & Trust, Ogallala, 2000 EDGE Supporter of the Year.

-- Cliff & Pat Dailey, Hyannis, 2000 EDGE Entrepreneur of the Year.

-- T.O. Davison, Brock, 2000 EDGE Individual Support of the Year.

The Nebraska EDGE (Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs) is the umbrella organization for rural entrepreneurial training programs hosted by local communities, organization and associations. The Nebraska EDGE offers 10-week business start-up, a 10-week agricultural entrepreneurs and a 12-week existing business plan development courses. The EDGE program also offers an on-line personnel development course free to the public.

The Center for Applied Rural Innovation, which oversees the Nebraska EDGE program, is a part of NU's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.