

Tractor test lab to host tractor and electric car competition April 10-11

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The Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus will host two competitions in April designed to evaluate young people's ability to safely maneuver tractors and build and drive electric-powered cars.

Nebraska 4-H and FFA students will compete for trophies and a scholarship at the 2010 Nebraska Tractors Operators' contest from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. April 10, said Dave Morgan, assistant director of the lab.

Participants will complete a general knowledge test, identify parts and tools, conduct a tractor safety inspection and find information from an operator's manual.

They also will maneuver a tractor pulling a two-wheel implement and a tractor pulling a four-wheel wagon through separate driving courses.

Points will be assessed for written and timing errors, crossing boundary lines, touching markers and safety errors. The lowest total score wins the competition.

In addition to trophies, a \$500 scholarship for UNL's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources will be awarded to the top competitor in each group.

On April 11, high school students from across Nebraska will participate in the 2010 Big Red Invitational rally at the laboratory's four-tenths-mile-long track, Morgan said. The rally, co-sponsored by the Omaha Public Power District and the Nebraska Public Power District, is a competition in which teams of students design and build one-person electric vehicles.

The majority of teams are composed of high school students, although students from community colleges and universities will compete as well, he said.

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In its second year on East Campus, the competition will have competitors driving their vehicles on the track that normally feels the weight of 100 to more than 500 horsepower farm tractors, Morgan said.

The vehicles first must pass a technical and safety inspection and then compete in a one-hour rally to complete as many laps as possible without charging or recharging the batteries. A driver change must occur in the middle of the race.

Teams from 58 Nebraska high schools will compete as will two teams each from Iowa and South Dakota, Central Community College in Columbus, Wayne State College and UNL.

Competitors who complete a CASNR interest form will be in a drawing for a one-time \$500 scholarship.

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