

What to know before going to Omaha's free Memorial Park concert. **Page A4**



White House renovations continue with column restoration work. **Page A8**

# Omaha World-Herald

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## Joint accreditation begins for UNMC, UNL

**JULIE ANDERSON**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

With approvals from two national bodies, key metrics for the University of Nebraska Medical Center and University of Nebraska-Lincoln will be tallied as one for the first time in 58 years, university leaders announced Monday.

The U.S. Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission have formally recognized the joint accreditation of the two universities, completing a process approved earlier this year, officials said in a Monday letter to university staff. It was signed by NU President Dr. Jeffrey Gold, UNMC Chancellor Dr. Dele Davies and UNL Interim Chancellor Katherine Ankerson. The joining of two of the NU

system's four campuses under a single banner started with the aim of boosting the university's national standing. The NU Board of Regents gave permission for university officials to begin working with the national bodies to complete the merger in November.

Joint accreditation — and combined reporting of research funding — also will aid NU's quest to rejoin the prestigious Association of American Universities, which has been a major goal of NU administrators and regents. Every other school in the Big Ten is an AAU member, and both UNMC and UNL are part of the conference's research partnership.

Please see **ACCREDITATION**, Page A2



CHRIS MACHIAN, THE WORLD-HERALD

**Dr. H. Dele Davies, who recently was named UNMC's chancellor, left, and Dr. Jeffrey Gold, University of Nebraska president, speak during a forum in the Sorrell Center at UNMC on Jan. 6.**

## Quarantine unit shares the lessons it learned

**JULIE ANDERSON**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

It's a wrap.

Leaders at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and Nebraska Medicine marked another mission accomplished Tuesday, the day after the remaining six of 18 former passengers from a hantavirus-stricken cruise ship returned home after 42 days of monitoring at the National Quarantine Unit on UNMC's campus.

Medical officials also talked of the lessons learned during the long activation, some of which they have already begun sharing with other members of the national system that responds to infectious disease outbreaks.

"As an academic medical center, we are constantly learning from our experiences and always doing things better next time," said Dr. Jeffrey Gold, the University of Nebraska president and a former UNMC chancellor. "And rest assured, there will always be a next time."

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen celebrated the fact that no new cases of hantavirus associated with the outbreak on the Dutch ship MV Hondius had occurred in the United States since the quarantine began May 11.

He also thanked the quarantine unit and the Nebraskans who supported them and the passengers.

Individuals and businesses sent care baskets and meals, including Runzas and Omaha Steaks. Schoolchildren sent cards with well wishes, and a junior high band performed. University experts provided lessons on topics ranging from the annual sandhill crane migration to travel medicine. Colleagues filled in for healthcare providers working shifts in the quarantine unit.

"It's really important for everybody to realize what took place in the last six weeks," Pillen said. "This is the only place in the world that it could have happened."

At peak, the Nebraska team monitored 18 passengers. In recent weeks, a dozen pushed to be allowed to return to their home states to complete the monitoring period under the supervision of local health departments.

Hantavirus, which is rare but potentially deadly, is carried primarily by rodents, and most strains cannot spread from person to person. But the Andes strain identified on the ship, previously detected only in South America, can spread from person to person in rare cases that typically involve close contact.

As of June 17, a total of 13 cases linked to the ship had been reported globally, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Three infected passengers died.

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## Sooner Magic leads to CWS title



JOSEPH CIEMBRONIEWICZ, THE WORLD WORLD

**The Oklahoma Sooners couldn't be stopped Monday night — and for much of the College World Series. OU collected the program's third national title, aided by an offense that found its swing late in the year. In the finale, the Sooners knocked off North Carolina 13-2. That also put the SEC on top of the college baseball dogpile again for a seventh straight year. And it came from a team that tied for 11th place in the conference. It was quite a magical postseason run. See more coverage in Sports.**

## Nebraska SNAP restrictions rejected

Judge rules against five states' bans on some items

**JUAN SLINAS II**  
Nebraska Examiner

LINCOLN — A federal judge ruled Monday to end a Nebraska pilot program that restricts the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — SNAP — money to purchase pop and energy drinks.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson wrote that Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins overstepped her authority when she approved five states' requests to ban SNAP recipients from buying unhealthy food.

In her opinion, Jackson wrote that Rollins waived "not just a mere administrative or technical obstacle, but the very definition of 'food' as it was laid down by Congress."

Nebraska was the first state to implement such rules last year. At the time, Gov. Jim Pillen said during a press conference that "there's absolutely zero reason for taxpayers to be subsidizing



VINCENT ALBAN, REUTERS

**A person walks along an aisle in an Aldi grocery store. Five states, including Nebraska and Iowa, sought to limit certain purchases by SNAP recipients.**

purchases of soda and energy drinks."

The limits went into effect on Jan. 1 of this year.

The federal lawsuit was brought against Rollins by five people who participate in SNAP in Nebraska, Colorado, Iowa, Tennessee and West Virginia. The ruling applies to the SNAP restrictions in all five states.

Ken Smith, Nebraska Appleseed's Economic Justice Program

director, said the court's ruling is "a significant win for Nebraska households struggling with the rising cost of groceries."

"This decision reaffirms that changes to this vital program must comply with federal law," Smith said. "Families should be able to count on SNAP to help meet their basic needs without facing uncertainty about what foods they can purchase, and grocery stores and small

businesses across the state that accept SNAP benefits deserve the same clarity."

The group criticized the decision to implement the rules last year.

Officials at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services said they are currently reviewing the court's decision.

"As this decision is against a federal agency, Nebraska DHHS will await guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture regarding next steps," said Jeff Powell, Nebraska DHHS's director of communications.

A total of 23 states have applied for waivers that would allow them to limit the purchase of certain food and drinks by SNAP recipients, according to the USDA website.

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### Weather

High: 83 Low: 61  
Mostly sunny Details: A12

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