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Gov. Heineman Names Ann Bleed of Lincoln as Director of Natural Resources Department

(Lincoln, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman today named Ann Bleed of Lincoln to serve as the Director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR). She has served as acting director of the department since August 2005.

“I have known Ann a long time, and I know one thing above all else,” Gov. Heineman said. “She is an intelligent and adaptable engineer who will put science ahead of politics on the issue of water. As we move ahead with the challenging issues at hand, the state of Nebraska needs a moderating voice to address the actions and policies impacting Nebraska agriculture. Having had the opportunity to work with Ann, it is clear she brings a very straightforward approach to the discussion of our water challenges, and I value her input and leadership. I’m delighted she has agreed to stay on in this official capacity and look forward to continuing to work with her.”

State law requires the DNR director to be a professional engineer with at least five years’ experience in irrigation-related work. Bleed is licensed in civil engineering. At the time of her appointment as acting director she was also an adjunct professor in both the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and the College of Engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has been with DNR since 1988, serving as Nebraska’s State Hydrologist from 1988 to 2000 before becoming deputy director.

Blead said, “I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve the state in such an important role. I want to continue strengthening our partnerships with the Natural Resources Districts, irrigation districts and other water interests across the state. Together, we will continue working to ensure responsible and sustainable management of Nebraska’s natural resources.”

Blead holds advanced degrees in ecology and industrial and management systems engineering, among others, and earned her doctorate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As director, she will be paid an annual salary of \$102,000.

In her first action as director, Bleed hired Brian Dunnigan of Lincoln to serve as Deputy Director. Dunnigan had been acting deputy, supervising DNR’s Dam Safety, Flood Plain Management and Photogrammetry divisions. He is a registered professional engineer and a certified flood plain manager, and has worked for DNR for 20 years.

Blead said, “Brian has proven extremely valuable in providing oversight for agency operations. He has significant experience in a wide range of water issues, but most importantly he listens well and has strong management skills.”