

Two named for forestry award

By Natural Resources Conservation Service

The chief of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the chief of the USDA Forest Service have named two agency leaders in Nebraska as winners of the “Two Chiefs Partnership Award for 2008” for exemplary forest stewardship. The award winners were announced in December in Washington.

Steve Chick, NRCS State Conservationist in Nebraska, and Scott Josiah, State Forester and Director of the Nebraska Forest Service, have been cited for their partnership efforts in implementing forestry practices.

“Working with the NE Forest Service has been critical for NRCS since we only have one forester serving the entire state with technical services. For years we both have taken an active role in each agency’s forestry committees to coordinate programs and practices. It was a NE Forest Service employee who wrote our windbreak management technical guide which is used by our 77 county offices for help” said Chick.

“It was a logical expansion in 2004 when NRCS began funding four additional foresters across the state with the NFS, and one with the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District in Norfolk,” said Chick.

Josiah said these added foresters have helped with “agro forestry” emphasizing tree and shrub plantings for protection of soil, water, livestock, homes and wildlife. These foresters have worked with NRCS assisting landowners, especially with Farm Bill programs.

The two organizations have recently joined efforts with the USDA Forest Service, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, local natural resources districts, and NE Department of Agriculture to launch a “Conservation Tree Initiative” statewide. The number of trees being planted each year has been on a declining trend. Goal of the initiative is to increase tree and shrub planting achieving 1.7 million trees, one for every citizen, to be planted each of the next three years.