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CITY OF KEARNEY **PRESS RELEASE** **For Immediate Release**

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Brown Bag History Series – “Vulnerable Harvests: Risk and Resiliency in the Cold War Great Plains” presented by Dr. David Vail at the Kearney Public Library

Kearney Public Library and UNK-History Department welcome you to the History Brown Bag lunch series Wednesday, July 13, from noon - 1:00 p.m. Dr. David Vail will present *Vulnerable Harvests: Risk and Resiliency in the Cold War Great Plains*.

"*Vulnerable Harvests* will examine the shifting roles of agricultural scientists, government policymakers, and farmers in the midst of increasing ecological risks to the North American Grasslands in the 1950s. The Great Plains Agricultural Council (GPAC) conducted numerous interdisciplinary experiments to protect harvests and preserve “industrial agriculture environments.” President Eisenhower’s support of farm-based conservation through a series of climate, weather, soil, disease, drought, and pesticide studies conducted by the GPAC formalized cultivation practices, endorsed research, and reinforced market relationships that came to define Cold War era agriculture. As highlighted the 1957 Drought Inspection Tour, the GPAC’s efforts to investigate climate changes, crop disease, chemical toxicity, and drought connected to earlier ideas about conservation of natural resources before the Rachel Carson/ *Silent Spring* era, offering solutions to make the Great Plains’ agricultural lands more protected and secure in the early Cold War era."

David Vail is Associate Professor of History at University of Nebraska at Kearney. He specializes in Environmental and Agricultural History, Science and Medicine, the Great Plains, and Public History. Vail is the author of two books: *Chemical Lands: Pesticides, Aerial Spraying, and Health in North America's Grasslands since 1945* published by the University of Alabama Press in 2018 and *Interpreting Environment at Museums and Historic Sites* with co-author Debra A. Reid published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2019. His current monograph project *Vulnerable Harvests: Risk and Resiliency in the Cold War Great Plains* is under advance contract with University of Nebraska Press. Vail also serves on the Board of Directors for Humanities Nebraska and Board of Governors for the Center for Great Plains Studies. In his spare time, David loves to mountain bike in the Great Plains and the Front Range.

This program is free and open to the public so bring your lunch and learn! This collaborative program is presented by UNK-History Department, and the Kearney Public Library. Mark your calendars for this ongoing series on August 10 with a presentation by Lina Homberger Cordia.

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