

**JOHN A. GALE**  
Nebraska Secretary of State

P.O. Box 94608  
State Capitol, Suite 2300  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4608  
Phone: (402) 471-2554  
Fax: (402) 471-3237  
[www.sos.state.ne.us](http://www.sos.state.ne.us)

**News Release**  
Feb. 28, 2006

**Contact:** Sharon Hambek  
(402) 471-6044, [sharon.hambek@sos.ne.gov](mailto:sharon.hambek@sos.ne.gov)

### **Statehood Day dinner on March 4 to honor six**

LINCOLN – The NEBRASKAland Foundation will present six notable Nebraskans with achievement awards at the Statehood Day dinner March 4 at the State Capitol.

The foundation will honor former U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey, U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser of Garland, former University of Nebraska President Martin Massengale of Lincoln, journalist Keith Blackledge of North Platte, former state Sen. LaVon Crosby of Lincoln and agricultural leader Jack Maddux of Wauneta.

The formal-attire event starts with a 6 p.m. reception, followed by dinner at 7 p.m. in the Rotunda. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the dinner.

Kerrey will receive the NEBRASKAlander Award, which is given for distinguished service to the state's social, historical, cultural or economic well-being.

Kerrey was Nebraska governor from 1983-87 and served in the U.S. Senate from 1989-2001. As a politician, he earned a reputation as someone who was not afraid to take controversial stands or tackle complex policy issues.

He is president of The New School, a university in New York City. He served on the 9/11 commission that investigated the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Kooser will receive the Sower Award, which is presented for significant contributions to the benefit of mankind, Nebraska and the nation.

Kooser, a retired insurance executive, is in his second term as U.S. poet laureate and serves as an English professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

He won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his book “Delights & Shadows” (2004). His poetry is known for dealing with universal themes in accessible ways.

Massengale and Blackledge will each receive the Wagonmaster Award, which recognizes leadership in causes that benefit the state or nation.

From 1981-94, Massengale provided distinguished leadership as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln chancellor and later as the NU president. He is currently director of the Center for Grassland Studies and a professor at UNL.

A noted agricultural scientist, he has lectured extensively at regional, national and international scientific meetings. His expertise has taken him to numerous foreign countries to review educational programs and agricultural issues.

Blackledge served as editor of the North Platte Telegraph for 25 years, retiring in 1992. Locally, he was instrumental in the formation of the Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation, the construction of the Great Plains Regional Medical Center and the establishment of a Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

On the state level, he served on the State College System Board of Trustees and is a former chairman of the Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Public Radio Foundation, Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission and Nebraska State Historical Society.

Crosby will receive the Trailblazer Award, which recognizes individuals who by their service set an example for others to follow.

Crosby’s background includes work at the Hastings Tribune and as an aide to U.S. Sen. Roman Hruska of Nebraska. She served in the Legislature from 1989-2001, representing District 29 in Lincoln.

While in the Legislature, she championed the establishment and funding of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, which supports arts and humanities programs for schools and communities. She has been active in a broad range of civic activities, including the Nebraska Arts Council, Lincoln Downtown Senior Center, Lincoln Symphony, Lincoln Community Playhouse, St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center and Boy Scouts.

Maddux will receive the Pioneer Award, which recognizes individuals whose contributions embody the spirit of Nebraska’s heritage.

Maddux, a third-generation cattleman, has been active in water and natural resources policy issues in Nebraska. He currently serves on the state Water Policy Task Force. He was involved in the formulation of the state’s groundwater management legislation and is a former member of the Platte Whooping Crane Trust.

He has been active in the National Cattlemen's Association and is a former president of the Nebraska Stock Growers Association and Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management. He has been involved in youth programs, serving as a 4-H and Boy Scouts leader.

Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale serves on the NEBRASKAland Foundation's board and helps host the dinner.

The foundation, which was founded in 1962, sponsors numerous activities and programs throughout the year as part of its mission to promote Nebraska and the state's "good life."

#