

UNL architecture students present ideas for Albion

Visitors got a glimpse of how downtown Albion could look in the future at an Oct. 12 review of ideas developed by UNL Professor Martin Despang's fifth- and sixth-year architecture students.

Held in Lincoln's old City Hall, people from the Albion area, UNL students and professors, and professional architects from Lincoln were invited to join in this four-hour event.

Albion is at the center of a semester-long studio focusing on ways to help rural communities prosper in the 21st century. The students, who visited Albion in late August, each designed and presented a project intended to help revitalize Albion's downtown area.

Projects included dwelling and retail spaces, an art and history center, an off-the-grid child care center, a new library, a recreational center, art galleries and performance spaces, a combination winery/microbrewery and many others. Concepts involved both new constructions and the renovation of existing structures.

This event showcased the first of three designs each student will develop over the course of this semester. The centerpiece of this display was a scale model of Albion's downtown, complete with photos of existing buildings affixed to the fronts of the models. This enabled the students to demonstrate how their designs would fit into the existing community.

In addition to the model of the downtown, the students created intricate larger models of their projects that were displayed around the room. Students explained their ideas to visitors over the course of the afternoon.

This project is intended to dovetail with the work of Albion's planning consultants, Hanna:Keelan and Associates of Lincoln. Tim Keelan of Hanna:Keeland is a member of the College of Architecture's professional advisory

board.

In summing up the event, Albion City Administrator Andy Devine said: "The boundless creativity and optimism of these talented students is quite contagious. Reviewing the projects shifts one's perspective from the community's shortcomings to endless possibilities of what we could become by accentuating the many positives our community has to offer. While some projects may seem more feasible than others, even the most outrageously innovative ideas provide fuel for envisioning the community's future. I encourage members of the community to review the projects when the opportunity comes."

The next review will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 4, at Lincoln's old City Hall building. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Paul Hosford of Albion.