



Corporate Office/Telesis, Inc • 729 Q Street • Lincoln, Nebraska 68508 • 402-434-5964 • Fax (402) 434-3291

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 26, 2009

### Volunteers to Install Rain Garden at Lincoln Restaurant

LINCOLN, NE — After nearly two years of planning, volunteers will begin planting more than 3,200 native plants, 29 trees and 42 shrubs at FireWorks Restaurant located at the corner of South 86<sup>th</sup> Drive and Old Cheney Road on Friday, May 29.

A rain garden is a planted depression that allows for the absorption of rainwater runoff from urban areas such as roof tops, sidewalks, parking lots and lawns. Rainwater runoff typically contains a variety of contaminants, nutrients and sediments that are collected during its journey from rain cloud to storm drain. Research from the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) shows that contaminants carried by rainwater runoff account for 70 percent of all surface water pollution. Rain gardens are effective in removing up to 90 percent of rainwater pollutants.

Water from the north parking lot at FireWorks Restaurant will be distributed into the garden, where plants will absorb pollutants, improve water quality, reduce flow into the storm drain system and recharge underground aquifers. Once established, the garden will be self-sustaining and the native plants will thrive without the application of additional water or chemicals, like fertilizers and pesticides.

“We’re excited about the rain garden project because it shows what line cooks, servers, managers and administrative staff can accomplish when they work together,” said Mandi Woledge, general manager. “We hope to inspire others to adopt similar green actions and keep our community moving in a positive direction.”

Jay Jarvis, co-founder, Lazlo, Inc., the parent company of FireWorks, says he hopes the garden will increase awareness about water conservation and show the public that native plants are not only a smart choice for landscape design, but also a beautiful one.

“The rain garden will help promote these ideas throughout the community and spark discussions regarding simple activities that homeowners and restaurant owners alike can implement to make a difference in our environmental sustainability,” Jarvis said.

FireWorks Restaurant is no newcomer to being green. The restaurant was built from the ground up with energy efficiency and sustainability in mind and is outfitted with a state-of-the-art geothermal heating and cooling system. In addition, the restaurant recycles around 20,000 pounds of glass and 7,200 gallons of used fryer oil every year.

The 5,400 square foot rain garden is to be installed in the grassy space between the back of the restaurant and the Antelope Creek bike trail. Compared to conventional grass, rain gardens allow 30 percent more water to soak into the soil which reduces the volume of water flowing into storm drains and increases the amount of water that is returned to groundwater storage.

The rain garden is being developed in partnership with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Trees for Nebraska Towns, The City of Lincoln/Watershed Management Division, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Campbell’s Nurseries and Gardens and Telesis, Inc. Funding for the project is supported by Trees for Nebraska Towns, The City of Lincoln Rain Garden Water Quality Project, The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and Telesis, Inc.

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