

Recently I had the pleasure of joining hundreds of Nebraskans and guests at the Homestead National Monument near Beatrice. We gathered to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Homestead Act of 1862. One of the most enduring public policies in our nation's history, the Homestead Act afforded more than 1.6 million Americans the opportunity to build homes and raise families on land of their own. You can view my comments at the event [here](#). Nebraska was one of 30 states in which more than 270 million acres of land (equaling about 10 percent of all land in the U.S.) transferred from the U.S. government to private ownership. The 150th anniversary celebration offered a moment for special reflection on the Homestead Act's unique role in our state's history.

The Homestead Act recognized a universal desire within persons – to create, to sustain, to belong – leading Nebraska to become one of the top agricultural regions in the world. It also helped instill within us a Heartland heritage of hard work, personal responsibility, and neighbor helping neighbor that still informs our culture today.