

EXECUTIVE

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Keeping You Posted

Every week during the Nebraska legislative session, your State Chamber sends each member a *Legislative Report* that highlights the week's activity, reports key bills of interest, and often asks for your help in contacting state senators regarding legislation. Each year, in preparation for the session, we send members information about how the Unicameral works, Senators' addresses and phone numbers. Once the session begins, we send a complete list of all bills introduced, weekly updates of all hearings, a weekly bill status form, and timely stories on the bills, weekly activities, and what to watch for in the next week.

Our deadline is generally late in the morning on Thursdays. Committee and floor action on bills monitored by the State Chamber are the key items we report on. Lists of all priority bills, calendar updates, and key votes may be part of the *Report* as well. Staff monitors all legislative activity and reads the daily legislative journal so that the bill status pages are up to date. Once the *Legislative Report* is completed, we have copies made and begin the process of collating and stuffing envelopes to get the service in the mail (first class) to

our members by Friday afternoon.

We know information is critical for any business. Quality information on key bills that can affect your business is the reason why we work hard to make the weekly *Legislative Report* as accurate and timely as possible. We also list key bills on our web page and have it updated regularly. You can also link directly to the Unicameral Home Page from our website. Finally, your staff watches and listens daily to all floor activity, in addition to being a presence in the Capitol lobby. If you ever need to know the status of a bill, or any other information, just give us a call. ■

Kay Koch, Database/Legislative File Manager prepares a recent Legislative Report for mailing.



President Bush's Tax Cut Before The Senate

We have reported that the first of several tax cut bills have advanced from the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, containing the centerpiece of the President's plan - lower marginal tax rates for every American who pays personal income taxes. Further measures (including elimination of the "marriage penalty" and a raise in the child deduction) have been advanced from the House side, and the Senate will soon be addressing these critical issues.

The cuts would be largest in percentage terms for low- and middle-income families and largest in dollars terms for those with higher incomes - but everyone would benefit. Small companies, in particular, are pleased with the President's proposal. The across-the-board cut in individual tax

rates not only would place more money in the wallets of American consumers, but also give thousands of small businesses a well-deserved break from the top individual tax rate of 40 percent that they now pay! In addition, future repeal of the death tax would stop the forced sale of small companies to pay the taxman.

Reducing marginal tax rates will do more than lighten our individual tax burdens. It will give our entire economy a much-needed lift, boosting our companies and our communities. It will provide stronger incentives for work, savings and investment. And it will head off a federal spending spree that would become part of the budget baseline, perpetuating itself for years to come.

(Continued on page 3)

“Perception Is Reality”

Maybe, coming from a retail background, I pay more attention to this marketing truism. Maybe, I have found myself facing situations all too often that reinforce this axiom. But all of us have been there and we need to constantly be aware of the strength **perception** plays in the success of each of our businesses and yes, the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

In his book *The Invisible Touch*, author Harry Beckwith states: “If your mind expects something to happen, it will.”

How many times have we as business leaders faced this situation?

Who has not received a phone call either placing a product order or asking for services to be performed and after stating the request...next receives the question, “How long will it take to deliver?” Who has not talked with someone who felt we had let them down in our business dealings, only after hearing their concerns, realized that we were performing in an efficient manner, and their expectations were what was unrealistic? How many times have we heard someone express what he or she felt our company did or said and found it to be far from the whole truth? Often the notion came back to us third or fourth hand, mutating to a life of its own. Other people’s perceptions were now creating a new reality.

Beckwith continues in his book, “Your job is not to deliver a service, it is to create satisfaction. **Make your clients believe they will be satisfied, and they will be, especially if you do it with passion.**”

This holds true for all of us. If a company is performing as a low price competitor, offering the lowest price will create that satisfaction; if a company is performing at a premium service level, anticipating the client’s needs, before they ask, will create satisfaction. For our State Chamber, responding to our members’ needs and providing education for our elected officials will create satisfaction.

How we have performed in the past, unfortunately, will not guarantee us success and satisfied clients for tomorrow. Times are rapidly changing, generations have different expectations, and

America and Nebraska reflect a broader multi-cultural population. As an organization and for each of our own businesses, we need to be aware of these changes and embrace them in our planning.

In an article from *Leadership 2000*, Robert Tucker emphasizes several driving forces for change. He identifies the need for us to recognize that our clients today expect us to be real time

responsive and to be user friendly. He encourages us to brainstorm ways to reduce and make better use of labor to provide the services our clients demand. He implores us to constantly listen to our clients who can provide us with innovative ideas for our own business’s success. As all of us strive to add value to the services we provide, he urges us to make sure that the value we add is the

value the customer seeks.

He reminds us that the true differentiation in providing high service is in assembling a team that really cares and finally he asks, “Where do your customers perceive a lack of quality?” and he tells us to ask the customers to get the information we need to respond to their perceptions.

All of us as leaders for our companies must be proactive for change rather than react to it. We must innovate and not only come up with new ideas, but bring them to life. It must take place at every level of our organizations. The market is changing too quickly and thus, resting on our laurels is not an option any more.

I invite you to examine your own business; I invite you to share with other business leaders in our organization your innovations for change. I can assure you that your Chamber staff and Board of Directors are looking at change. We constantly are molding the work of the Chamber to be more real time responsive and user friendly. Over the past year, I believe the Board and staff have made some changes and innovations to meet those goals, and I encourage you to review the new and exciting direction of our organization.

In closing, I invite you to contact either Barry or me with any ideas you have that will enable our organization to move forward faster, to serve the needs of our membership better, and to continue to innovate throughout our organization. ■

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State Chamber Views...

Guest Editorial by Dick Campbell, State Chamber Chairman of the Board

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Straight Talk

■ Pat On The Back

Congratulations to **Richard E. Anderson of Shell Valley Cos., Inc.** as Nebraska's Small Business Person of the Year. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will honor the Platte Center company and 52 other small businesses at ceremonies next month in Washington. The company builds fiberglass Jeep replacement bodies and 427 SC Cobra car kits. ■

President Bush's Tax Cut

(Continued from page 1)

The key to enactment will be the Senate, where the 50-50 split means the bill will need bipartisan support. Please contact Senator Ben Nelson and ask for his support of this tremendous opportunity to cut taxes and hold the line on spending! All of the rest of the Nebraska delegation are ready to support the President. **Write Senator Nelson at 720 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. His phone number is (202) 224-6551, and the fax number is (202) 228-0012.** ■

Cornerstone Project

The State Chamber has initiated a new membership category — the Cornerstone member. A member paying a minimum of \$5,000 in dues investment, and the company is near the recommended dues schedule, would be eligible to become a Cornerstone member. The immediate Past Chairman of the State Chamber serves as Chairman of the Cornerstone members for a one-year term.

Benefits to becoming Cornerstone members include costs of seminars covered; all council or Board meeting meals complimentary; two full Annual Meeting registrations at the \$5,000 level; guided tour of Capitol; e-mail legislative reports and newsletters to top people within Cornerstone company.

The key to this program is the recognition of key State Chamber members, doing their fair share, and even more than their fair share (if a smaller

company) to help provide additional funding for the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry to enhance and expand its services to all State Chamber members. Current Cornerstone Members are:

<i>Ameritas</i>	<i>Kellogg's</i>
<i>Blue Cross & Blue Shield</i>	<i>Mutual of Omaha</i>
<i>Cabela's</i>	<i>Nebraska Cable</i>
<i>Caterpillar</i>	<i>Nebraska Public</i>
<i>ConAgra Foods</i>	<i>Power District</i>
<i>Douglas Manufacturing</i>	<i>Pfizer</i>
<i>First Data</i>	<i>Union Pacific</i>
<i>IBP</i>	<i>Vetter Health Services</i>

For more information on this program, please contact James Berringer, Vice President-Membership & Marketing at the State Chamber. ■

Washington Trip Set, Even Better Time To Ask for Tax Cut!

The annual State Chamber Congressional visit to Washington will be on April 30 and May 1, 2001. With President Bush's Tax Cut proposal (see story on page 1) likely to be on the Senate agenda, it's a great opportunity to visit our delegation and make your views known! As in past trips, we will host a luncheon on Tuesday, May 1, in the Russell Senate Office Building for Nebraska's congressional delegation and their chief staff members. On Monday, April 30, we will attend an Issue Briefing at U.S. Chamber of Commerce Headquarters. In addition, members can also attend the traditional "Nebraska Break-

fast@ at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 1, at the Dirksen Office Building cafeteria. There is a \$6.25 charge and reservations should be made through the State Chamber Office at (402) 474-4422, or FAX at (402) 474-5681.

Members are encouraged to make their own flight arrangements, and there are a number of flights out of Omaha and Lincoln. Again, we have made arrangements with the University Club for lodging. The University Club is convenient to downtown, and rates are \$130 per person per night. Contact the University Club at (302) 862-8800. The group number is 1980. ■

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Mini-Institute In Hastings April 25

The 2001 Chamber Mini-Institute will be held Wednesday, April 25, at the Central Community College in Hastings. These programs are designed for part-time chamber executives and volunteer leaders of small chambers or commercial clubs, especially those without professional staff. Business leaders and local chamber leaders are also encouraged to attend to help learn to build an action-oriented chamber of commerce. A number of key resource people in community and economic development will present programs and ideas to help smaller communities work smarter, not harder.

The State Chamber, Nebraska Chamber of

Commerce Executives, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Assistants, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Economic Developers Association, Central Community College, Nebraska Development Network Central Region, and South Platte United Chambers of Commerce present the Mini-Institutes. Further support comes from the Nebraska Public Power District, the Omaha Public Power District, Peoples Natural Gas/UtiliCorp United, and the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool. Registration is limited and \$20 covers lunch, breaks, and materials. For more information, contact Don Mihovk at the State Chamber. ■



State Chamber Welcomes New “Investors”

Membership in the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry is an investment in Nebraska’s economic well-being. This month, the State Chamber welcomes the following new members and encourages members to consider doing business with fellow Chamber members.

BIG SPRINGS

McClung Aerial Spraying, Inc.
Jeanette McClung

COLUMBUS

Mid-State Engineering & Testing, Inc.
Jim Musilek
Sponsor: Raymond C. Ward, Ward Laboratories, Inc.

FREMONT

Pete’s Custom Metal, Inc.
Jack Dahlhauser

FRIEND

Tuttle, Inc.
Gary Tuttle

GRAND ISLAND

Pro Nails
The M. Truong

HOLDREGE

Agri Co-op
Ron Jurgens

HOMER

Steve Harris Construction, Inc.
Angi Meins

LINCOLN

Bob Buethe
Sponsor: Jerry Worth, SilverStone Group

iUniverse.com, Inc.

Christy Killingsworth

Lincoln Radiology Group, P.C.

Jody Svec
Sponsor: Jerry Worth, SilverStone Group

Rogers Jewelers

Lynn Beiriger

Seacrest & Kalkowski, P.C.

Kent Seacrest
Sponsor: Dick Campbell, Campbell’s Nurseries & Garden Centers

Solutions For Your Office

Keith D. Snyder
Sponsors: Don Heimes, Corporate Finance Associates & Dan Vodvarka, Nebraska Society of Certified Public Accountants

MEAD

Water Engineering, Inc.
Vickie Push

NEBRASKA CITY

Mercer True Value Hardware
Gene & Mark Mercer

NORFOLK

Soda Crackers, Inc./dba
Country Kitchen
Vaughn Wiebusch
Sponsor: Paul McIntosh, McIntosh, Inc.

OGALLALA

Cobb Realty, Inc.
Diane England

OMAHA

Avaya
Steve Clark

Centennial Bank

James A. Hansen
Sponsor: Richard Hahn, Farmers National Company

MOSI/Multi-Option Systems, Inc.

Christine M. Carpino

Magnolia Metal Corporation
Adam Koslosky

SCOTTSBLUFF

N.O. Nelson Co. of Nebraska
Jim Vance

SEWARD

Hydraulic Equipment Service Inc.
Cornelius Sheehan

SHELTON

Gangwish Seed Farms, Inc.
Sherry Gangwish

SUMMITVILLE, OH

Summitcrest Farms, Inc.
Fred H. Johnson, III

WAYNE

Pac N Save
Donald Endicott