

# THE EXECUTIVE

## THE STATE CHAMBER



Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
February-March 2011

### 2011 Annual Meeting Highlights

**O**n February 3, the State Chamber held its Annual Meeting and Legislative Caucus at The Cornhusker Marriott in Lincoln. Dusty Vaughan, legislative counsel to Transportation and Telecommunications Committee Chair Deb Fischer, spoke to State Chamber Board members about Nebraska's current highway funding shortfall and LB84, Senator Fischer's bill to dedicate a half-cent of the current state sales tax to fund



Jeff Scherer (right), 2011 State Chamber Chairman, accepts the gavel from 2010 Chairman Richard Reiser.

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new highway priorities. He reported that a \$6.8 billion shortfall in revenue for roads is expected over the next 20 years.

Governor Dave Heineman spoke at the Chamber luncheon, which honored local chambers of commerce from across the state. The Governor issued a proclamation declaring February as "Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Month." Tina Welding, 2011 president of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives, recognized local chamber representatives.

The afternoon featured the traditional Legislative Leaders panel, where Speaker of the Legislature Mike Flood – along with Senators Abbie Cornett, Steve Lathrop, Deb Fischer and Lavon Heidemann – addressed some of the top issues facing the state lawmakers. The afternoon also featured lively discussions on the state's demographic outlook and economic competitiveness.

In the evening, more than 35 state senators joined nearly 500 State Chamber members and the Governor and First Lady Sally Ganem for the Annual Banquet. The banquet featured the passing of the gavel from 2010 State Chamber

Chairman Richard Reiser, Vice President of Government Affairs for Werner Enterprises, Omaha, to current Chairman Jeff Scherer, CFO for Smeal Fire Apparatus, Snyder.

Later in the evening, the 2011 Nebraska Business Hall of Fame inductees were acknowledged. The newest members are: Clayton Andrews of Norfolk, Andrews Van Lines; Leo Daly III of Omaha, Leo A. Daly Company; D. William (Bill) Smith of Lincoln, Speedway Motors; and Harold and George Wimmer (deceased) of West Point, Wimmer's Meat Products.

Sponsors of this year's State Chamber Annual Meeting were:

- Top Sponsor: ConAgra Foods.
- Platinum Level Sponsors: Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Nebraska;

*(Continued on page 2)*



Governor Dave Heineman presents the "Chamber of Commerce Month" proclamation to Sidney's Megan McGown, 2010 President of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives (NCCE), and West Point's Tina Welding, 2011 NCCE President.



**State Chamber Views...**  
**Editorial by Barry L. Kennedy, CAE, IOM**  
**President**  
**Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry**

## 'Success To Significance'

**A**s the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry moves toward its 100th anniversary, it is only proper to reflect upon the impact that the Chamber federation has had on the economic growth of our state.

Even more importantly, now is the time to establish the goals and vision that will give Nebraska a more distinct competitive edge for job growth and economic expansion in the future. Organizations tend to wait for people with vision to surface and then either support or oppose that direction. The State Chamber's Board of Directors has decided that for our organization to be truly relevant, we must provide that vision.

Over the past few months, the leadership of the State Chamber has been developing an initiative entitled, "Forging Nebraska's Future." This initiative will focus on our business climate and competitiveness. It will generate ideas and solutions that will continue to move Nebraska forward. It will be multi-faceted, with comparative analyses and benchmark evaluations in the areas of tax policy, economic development, agri-business, regulatory impact, infrastructure needs, education, technology, cost of doing business, and other areas that affect our ability to attract new business activity and keep talented people with needed skills in our state.

We will use tools such as the Nebraska Legislative Planning Committee's recent study to help identify emerging trends, assets, and challenges, as well as the long-term implications of current law and proposed legislative initiatives. Other studies will also be used to help establish priorities that will give our state the best opportunity to prosper.

The Chamber federation will play a key role in developing and utilizing

the findings of this program. To do this, pro-business organizations will need to formulate coalitions of like-minded organizations in support of common goals. Local chambers of commerce, local economic development groups, other statewide business associations, agri-business associations and the general employer community all need to be engaged in the effort to forge a new direction for Nebraska.

The task before us is daunting and demanding. The good news is that we have a solid foundation from which to begin our work. Many of you were present for the State Chamber's recent Annual Meeting, which focused on several topics relevant to economic progress.

Our first-ever Innovation and Technology Summit was held in January. It provided challenging ideas to help Nebraskans take advantage of new technologies through investment, collaboration and academic research.

The ball is already rolling in the right direction.

We are fortunate to have strong, visionary leadership in both the executive branch and legislative branch of our state government. These leaders are looking to Nebraska's chambers and other business associations to come forward with new ideas and a renewed commitment to invest in human capital. I challenge every member of the State Chamber to devote some time and thought to how we can best ensure a more prosperous Cornhusker State.

Communicate your ideas with your state senator and other elected officials, as well as with other members of the business community. Even one new idea is important, but the real impact will come from multiple ideas working collectively. When that happens, we will have a significant impact on Forging Nebraska's Future. ■

### 2011 Annual Meeting Highlights (continued from page 1)

Leo A. Daly Company; Lincoln Industries; Nebraska Public Power District.

- Gold Level Sponsors: Archer Daniels Midland; Black Hills Energy; Farmers Mutual Insurance; Mutual of Omaha; Nebraska Diplomats; Nelnet; Pinnacle Bank; SourceGas; U.S. Bank; Union Pacific; Vetter Health Services.

- Silver Level Sponsors: Aflac; Behlen Mfg. Co.; Cash-Wa Distributing; Children's Hospital & Medical Center; Duncan Aviation; Farmers State Bank; Gallup; Great Plains Communications; Husch Blackwell, LLP; Knudsen Law Firm; Northwestern Energy; NUCOR Steel; Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce; Valmont Industries; Wells Fargo. ■

## Labor Law Resources Available To Chamber Members

**E**mployers today must navigate a landscape of constantly changing labor laws. That is why the State Chamber is offering the Nebraska Human Resources Manual and Model Policies and Forms for Nebraska Employers – your complete guide to everything in the employment cycle.

With these publications, you'll be an expert on rules regarding recruiting and hiring; employee handbooks; safety in the workplace; independent contractors vs. employees; employee benefits, including health care reform; and more. In addition to the books, you'll also get a free e-book, so you can search for answers right on your computer. Plus, you will stay current on employment law changes with a free weekly e-newsletter, the Nebraska HR Update.

To receive the members-only price of \$126.40 for all three books, go to <https://accr.biz/nebraska> and enter code NEEM11M in the coupon discount box during checkout. Members may also order these resources by calling toll-free at 1-866-439-2227. ■

## State Chamber Comments on Union Notice Rule

Recently, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) proposed a new rule to require private employers to post a formal notice informing employees in detail of their right to unionize. The proposed rule reflects a dramatic recent pro-union swing at the NLRB, now comprised of a majority of pro-union members appointed by President Obama. In its notice, the NLRB lists multiple actions that employers would be prohibited from taking; each action would constitute an unfair labor practice under the National Labor Relations Act.

In its comments to the NLRB, the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry wrote that it was particularly concerned about the Board's proposed electronic notice requirements for employers. It also questioned whether the Board had statutory authority for its proposal if no employer misconduct had occurred. The Nebraska Chamber concluded: "The 111th Congress rejected an extreme overhaul of labor law when it refused to vote on the Employee Free Choice Act, also known as the card check bill. We believe the Board should resist any temptation to legislate via rulemaking and instead focus on its charge to maintain a balance between employee and employer rights." ■

## Berringer Promoted To Chamber's Senior Vice President



James D. Berringer, IOM, has been promoted to Senior Vice President – Membership Marketing of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The promotion was announced at the 2011 State Chamber's annual meeting.

Aside from his duties at the State Chamber, Berringer is also president of (NSAE) Nebraska Society of Association Executives, a professional organization for persons engaged in the management of voluntary trade, professional, technical, educational, philanthropic, or business associations or societies in Nebraska. Berringer is also the past president of the Association of State Chamber Professionals (ASCP), a national organization comprised of membership and marketing executives with state chambers of commerce from around the country.

Berringer has been with the staff of the State Chamber for 20 years. He received his Institute of Organization Management (IOM) designation in January from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The IOM program is a comprehensive course of study consisting of four annual sessions focusing on professional growth and development for association, chamber and non-profit professionals. ■



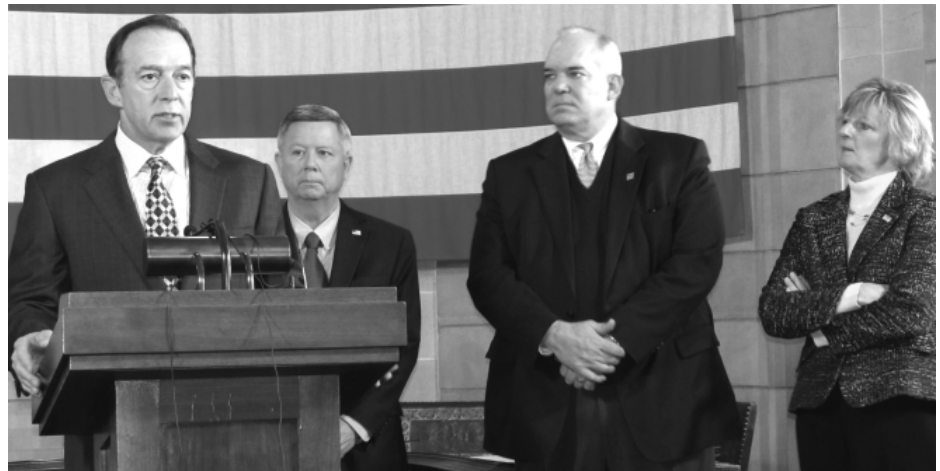
## Manufacturers, Chamber Honor Senator Johanns

On Friday, February 18, National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the national affiliate of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry, honored U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns as a recipient of the NAM Award for Manufacturing Legislative Excellence. The award, which was presented at the headquarters of ConAgra Foods in Omaha, recognizes federal lawmakers who have exemplary voting records that demonstrate solid support for American manufacturing and U.S. job growth. A ceremony to honor U.S. Rep. Lee Terry (NE-02) was also scheduled for later in the day, but had to be postponed due to votes in the House. Several State Chamber officials attended the event. State Chamber board members pictured above (from left) are: Chairman Jeff Scherer of Smeal Fire Apparatus in Snyder; Vice Chairman Chris Kircher of ConAgra Foods in Omaha; Past Chairman Tony Raimondo of Behlen Mfg. in Columbus; Immediate Past Chairman Dick Reiser of Werner Enterprises in Omaha; and President Barry Kennedy. ■

**O**n February 15, Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman was joined by leaders from the State Chamber and the Omaha and Lincoln Chambers to provide an update on the Nebraska Advantage economic incentive package implemented five years ago. The governor noted that more businesses submitted applications in 2010 than any other year since the program was implemented. The 250th application was received this January.

The Nebraska Advantage is the state's primary economic development program and has positioned "Nebraska to compete more aggressively in the global marketplace," the governor said. To date, 251 companies have applied for Nebraska Advantage credits. These companies plan to invest nearly \$5.67 billion in capital and create 18,879 new jobs.

## Governor, Chambers Tout Nebraska Advantage



Pictured with the governor is former State Chamber Chairman Marc LeBaron, Chairman and CEO of Lincoln Industries. Also pictured are David Brown, President and CEO of the Greater Omaha Chamber, and Wendy Birdsall, President of the Lincoln 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. We encourage you to consider doing business with fellow Chamber members.

#### **BROKEN BOW**

BD Diagnostic  
Preanalytical Systems  
Rex Boland

#### **CHADRON**

Nebraska Northwest  
Development Corporation  
Deb Cottier

#### **CRETE**

Crete Chamber of  
Commerce  
Sharlyn Sieck

Crete Lumber and Farm  
Supply  
Terry Dittmer

#### **HASTINGS**

Central Community  
College  
Kelly Christensen

#### **LINCOLN**

BCC Advisers  
R. Brad Harse

Nebraska Tax Research  
Council, Inc.  
Jason Hayes

#### **NET**

Ron Kallhoff

#### **Val Limited**

Duane L. Thomas

The Weitz Company  
Greg Key

*Recommended by Robert  
Nordquist, NEBCO, Inc.*

#### **NORTH PLATTE**

Weathercraft Co. of North  
Platte  
Scott Erickson

#### **OGALLALA**

Ogallala Comfort Com-  
pany  
Herbert D. Knudsen

#### **OMAHA**

Boyd Jones Construction  
Adam R. Herink

Fruhirth Consulting  
John B. Fruhirth

Ideal Images, Inc.  
Peter McCann

*Recommended by Lori  
Hogan, Home Instead Senior  
Care*

Medical Pain Center, P.C.  
Richard G. Belatti, Jr., M.D.

Solutionary, Inc.  
Steve Idelman

Sunderland Brothers  
Company  
John Sunderland

Vendorin, Inc.  
Darren Blakely  
*Recommended by Dick  
Thompson, Active Business  
Network*

#### **SCOTTSDLUFF**

Platte Valley Pet Food, Inc.  
Francis Heumesser

#### **SEWARD**

Concordia University-  
Nebraska  
David Kumm

*Recommended by Bill Hart-  
mann, Hartmann Construc-  
tion Co.*

Seward Motor Freight, Inc.  
Joan Tanderup

#### **TEKAMAH**

Rogert Ag and Real Estate  
Kent Rogert

#### **WEST POINT**

West Point News, Inc.  
Tom Kelly

#### **YORK**

Hamilton Sundstrand  
Denise Pfeifer