

# THE EXECUTIVE

## THE STATE CHAMBER



Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

March/April 2012

## 2012 Annual Meeting Highlights

**O**n February 2, the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry held its Annual Meeting and Legislative Caucus at The Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. Speaker of the Legislature Mike Flood of Norfolk addressed State Chamber board members about the key issues before lawmakers this year, including budget concerns and the proposed merger of the Department of Economic Development with the Department of Labor. He also briefed the board on his legislation to expand natural gas supplies in parts of rural Nebraska.

Governor Dave Heineman spoke at the State Chamber luncheon, which honored local chambers of commerce from across the state. The Governor issued a proclamation declaring February "Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Month." Tom Hastings, 2012 president of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives, recognized local chamber representatives.

The afternoon featured the traditional Legislative Leaders panel discussion. State Senators Chris Langemeier of Schuyler, Steve Lathrop of Omaha, and Deb Fischer of Valentine addressed some of the more

controversial issues in the Unicameral, including the Governor's tax cut plan, LB970. The afternoon also featured lively discussions on efforts to enhance the State's workforce, as well as a look at the State Chamber's new Forging Nebraska's Future initiative.

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 traditional passing of the gavel from 2011 State Chamber Chairman Jeff Scherer, CFO for Smeal Fire Apparatus in Snyder, to current Chairman Steve Ford, CEO for Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. in Lincoln.

Later, the 2012 Nebraska Business Hall of Fame class was inducted; the class members were: John Gottschalk, Omaha, philanthropist and retired publisher and CEO of the Omaha World-Herald; Hal Lainson (deceased), Hastings, Dutton-Lainson Co. and longtime State Chamber board member and former chairman; Bob and Cynthia Milligan, Lincoln, MI Industries and past Dean UNL College of Business; and Eldon N. Roth, Dakota Dunes, S.D., founder and president of BPI Technology, Inc.

To conclude the banquet, Bob Milligan,

a former U.S. Chamber of Commerce chairman and State Chamber board member, took a moment to recognize the Nebraska Chamber's 100th anniversary since its founding in 1912 as the Nebraska Manufacturers Association.

See enclosed insert for photo highlights of the 2012 Nebraska Chamber Annual Meeting and Business Hall of Fame Banquet.

**Below: Steve Ford (left), 2012 State Chamber Chairman, accepts the gavel from 2011 Chairman Jeff Scherer at the Annual Meeting's evening banquet at The Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. Chairman Scherer led the State Chamber through one of the most active legislative sessions in recent memory, including the enactment of several pro-business accomplishments.**



Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
PO Box 95128, Lincoln, NE 68509-5128  
Tel: (402) 474-4422 Fax: (402) 474-5681  
<http://www.nechamber.com>  
[nechamber@nechamber.com](mailto:nechamber@nechamber.com)  
Editor: Jamie Karl



## State Chamber Views...

Editorial by Barry L. Kennedy, CAE, IOM

President

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

# 'Nebraskans Leading The Nation'

Last month in this column, I wrote about some of the past leaders who have contributed significantly to the success of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the state's overall economic success.

A few years ago, the State Chamber started Leadership Nebraska to help people develop the necessary skills to assume leadership roles in the future. That program has even exceeded our very optimistic goals measured by program evaluation. The fact that a goodly number of graduates have already moved into new leadership roles, either in their respective organizations or in public office, speaks well for the program.

This month, I would like to share with you a sampling of Nebraskans who are helping lead national organizations. This demonstrates that when organizations need honest, credible leadership to take them in a progressive direction, many of them look to talented, engaged Nebraskans who have proven they have the ability to lead.

Let's begin by recognizing that Governor Heineman is serving as Chairman of the National Governors' Association. This marks the first time in more than half a century that a Nebraskan has served in this position. He was chosen because during the difficult times of the past several years, Nebraska has fared better than most states. Because of solid fiscal management and creative economic growth ideas, our state has maintained needed services without placing overly burdensome taxes on our citizens.

Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy also chairs the national association for his office. He, too, has proven his leadership abilities through his efforts to carry out the priorities of the administration, while developing strategies to

secure the safety of our citizens and businesses.

Because of Attorney General Jon Bruning's leadership on a variety of state and national issues, he has been elected by his peers to serve as chairman of his association. He has demonstrated time and again that he is knowledgeable and articulate on important policies that affect our state and nation.

For the first time in the history of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, that organization recently chose a Nebraskan to serve as Chairman. Bob Milligan distinguished himself and made Nebraska proud through his visionary leadership during a difficult economic time. Tom Donahue, President and CEO of the U.S. Chamber, said Bob brought "an excellent combination of both business and leadership experiences in helping the Chamber continue its push to promote international trade opportunities for American families, workers and companies."

Gothenburg banker Matt Williams will soon become Chairman of the American Bankers Association. Banking and finance is obviously a cornerstone of commerce in our nation and throughout the world. For a Nebraskan to chair this organization is a real show of confidence in Matt's knowledge and leadership ability.

Northeast Nebraska cattle feeder J.D. Alexander is now the President of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. He has demonstrated his ability to lead an organization that focuses on issues and technology of great importance to Nebraska's economy. Because of the trust his peers have shown in him, J.D. serves as a respected national spokesman for the cattle industry.

Jeffery Gerhart, Chairman/President of the Bank of Newman Grove,

has also assumed the mantle of Chairman of the Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA). Locally run community banks are a key component to economic growth in our state. It is inspiring that community bankers throughout the nation have shown great confidence in the stability of Nebraska's banking system to elect Jeff to this position.

State Chamber board member Chris Roth, President and CEO of Reinke Manufacturing Co. in Deshler, recently joined the Board of Directors of the National Association of Manufacturers. Manufacturing is on the rebound in America and a primary source of economic growth and job creation. Chris will add a Nebraska voice to the decisions that are made on the NAM Board, and he is already sharing important insight on employment and labor issues.

Loy Todd, President of the Nebraska New Car and Truck Dealers Association, is the President of the Automotive Trade Association Executives this year and represents that industry in a wide variety of business, political and advocacy activity. Loy's proven effectiveness within Nebraska has evolved into a position of responsibility at the national level.

By now, I am sure you will agree that when organizations need respected, credible leadership, they look to the Nebraskans within their ranks.

Whether it is manufacturing, banking, general business, agri-business or elected office, it is obvious that Nebraska common sense and leadership ability is getting noticed nationally.

There are surely others that I do not know about or failed to mention. These people will contribute greatly to their respective organizations, and they will also gain additional knowledge and expertise that they can bring back to our state. This experience will give us a competitive advantage as we compete in the global economy.

I am confident that I speak for all Nebraskans when I express great pride in knowing that the leaders mentioned here are not only serving their fellow Nebraskans, they are also paving the way for future Nebraska leaders. ■

## Governor Pays Tribute To Chambers Across Nebraska

In February, at the State Chamber's Annual Meeting in Lincoln, Governor Dave Heineman issued a proclamation declaring February as chamber of commerce month in Nebraska. The proclamation, which was presented to leaders of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives (NCCE), states, "Chambers of commerce play a vital role in shaping Nebraska's future by promoting the free enterprise system" and provide leadership while fostering "an economic climate conducive

to growth and development." The proclamation adds that chambers of commerce in Nebraska "enhance the quality of life for our citizens." ■



Pictured above receiving the proclamation from Governor Heineman are 2011 NCCE President Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong of the West Point Chamber of Commerce and 2012 NCCE President Tom Hastings of the Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce.



## State Chamber's D.C. Fly-In May 8-9

The State Chamber's 2012 visit to Washington, D.C., is now set for May 8-9. This change from the original dates was necessitated by the House of Representatives work schedule. This year's State Chamber Fly-In is once again sponsored by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). Fly-in participants will receive issue briefings and learn about the latest policy and political developments. Participants will also have lunch with Nebraska's U.S. senators and congressmen at the State Chamber's Congressional Luncheon on Capitol Hill. For more details or to register for the fly-in, contact Jamie Karl at [jkarl@nechamber.com](mailto:jkarl@nechamber.com) or (402) 474-4422. ■

## Small Business Day At The Capitol

More than 60 small business owners and other Nebraskans with small-business interests spent February 22 at the State Capitol to learn about legislative issues likely to impact the state's business climate. The 22nd annual Small Business Day at the Capitol provided key information on bills pending in the Legislature, while allowing participants the opportunity to learn more about the latest developments on issues such as taxes, economic development, labor law and regulations on businesses. Highlights included a visit from Governor Dave Heineman, as well as Senators Deb Fischer of Valentine, Lavon Heidemann of Elk Creek, and Galen Hadley of Kearney. The event was presented by the NFIB/Nebraska,

the State Chamber, the Lincoln and Omaha Chambers, and the Lincoln Independent Business Association. ■

Pictured below is Governor Dave Heineman talking about his comprehensive tax cut proposal contained in LB970. Seated behind the Governor is State Chamber Chairman-Elect Brian Hamilton, President of Beardmore Chevrolet in Bellevue, as well as State Chamber Small Business Council Chairman Larry Kopsa, Partner/Owner of Kopsa Otte + Associates in York.



## Forging Nebraska's Future Names Leadership Committee

Forging Nebraska's Future (FNF), the State Chamber's new long-term planning and policy initiative, recently announced the members of their statewide FNF Leadership Committee. The committee is split evenly between current State Chamber board members and representatives from Nebraska businesses who are under the age of 35. Bob Harris of RB Harris Company in Lincoln will chair the Committee. Other Committee Members include: Dr. Jim Linder of Omaha, Jason Stratman of Scottsbluff, State Senator Greg Adams of York, Kimberly Russel of Lincoln, Lyn Wallin Ziegenbein of Omaha, Tom Henning of Kearney, Reed Norris of Norfolk, Hobson Powell of Omaha, and Amy Adams Staples of Broken Bow. The Leadership Committee held their first meeting on March 8 in Lincoln. ■

## State FBLA Officers Shadow Nebraska Chamber

February 28 was FBLA "Shadow Day" at the Nebraska Chamber, as FBLA state officers spent the morning with Chamber staff. The shadowing project is part of the State Chamber's and the FBLA's partnership program. The FBLA leaders participated in the State Chamber's Public Affairs Council meeting. The students then visited the State Capitol to meet with their members of the Legislature and observe legislative activity from the floor of the Unicameral. The students met with Revenue Committee Chair and Bellevue Senator Abbie Cornett; Agriculture Committee Chair and Holdrege Senator Tom Carlson; Wilber Senator Russ Karpisek and Columbus Senator Paul Schumacher. ■



Pictured above are State Chamber President Barry Kennedy, Nebraska FBLA Parliamentarian Trevor Sorensen of Minden, FBLA President Amy Chin of Columbus, Senator Tom Carlson, FBLA Secretary Shyanne Thompson of Minden, FBLA Vice President Patrick Cook of Bellevue, and FBLA Reporter Sally Moore of Fairmont.

### 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.

#### ARLINGTON

Rhea Cattle Co., Inc.  
Katherine Rhea

#### BLAIR

Novozymes Blair Inc.  
Fred Reikowsky

Sid Dillon Chevrolet - Blair, Inc.  
Blake Dillon

#### CLAYTON, MO

Advantage Capital Partners  
Ryan Brennan

#### CRETE

Bunge Milling  
Eric Rasgorshek

#### GRAND ISLAND

McCain Foods USA, Inc.  
Scott Chaney

#### GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO

First Data USA  
Kimberly Hall  
*Recommended by: Bill Mueller & Kim Robak, Mueller Robak LLC*

#### KEARNEY

Good Samaritan Health Systems  
Mike Schnieders

Marshall Engines, Inc.  
Norris Marshall

#### Mid-Continent Technologies LLC

Dennis J. Schulz, J.D.  
*Recommended by: Tim White, Heartland Ag, Inc.*

Task Lighting Corp.  
Kenneth E. Anderson

#### LINCOLN

ComCor Holding Inc.  
Paul Schorr, III

GeneSeek, a Neogen Company  
Abraham Oommen  
*Recommended by: Natalie Peetz, Peetz & Co.*

Nebraska Pork Producers Assn., Inc.  
Larry Sitzman

Oasis Staffing  
Darrin Green

Rogge Capital Mgmt. LP  
Dwayne W. Rogge

Rustad Dermatology  
Elliott L. Rustad, M.D.

#### MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada  
Kylle Jordan

#### OMAHA

BNI of the Heartland  
Vince Vigneri

Certified Transmission Rebuilders, Inc.  
Peter Fink

Darland Construction Co.  
Duke Matz  
*Recommended by: Lori L. Hogan, Home Instead Senior Care*

Express Messenger Systems  
Rob Grinnell

Ford Storage & Moving Company  
Jack F. Ford

Marianna Industries, Inc.  
Bob Campney

Platte Institute for Economic Research  
John S. McCollister

#### QUINCY, WA

Yahoo  
Lisa Karstetter

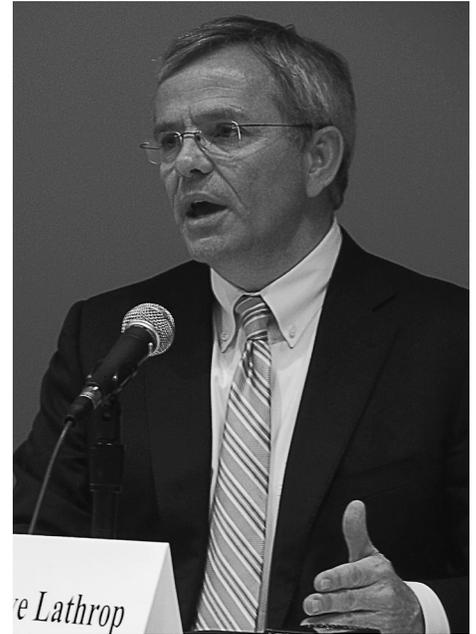
# 2012 State Chamber Annual Meeting Highlights



**Top:** Valentine Senator Deb Fischer and Schuyler Senator Chris Lange-meier discuss agribusiness issues with State Chamber board member John Childears of North Platte.

**Right:** Omaha Senator Steve Lathrop, Chairman of the Legislature's Business and Labor Committee, addressed State Chamber members at the annual Legislative Leaders discussion panel.

**Bottom:** Several UNL journalism students joined the State Chamber members at the February 2 Annual Meeting banquet. The Chamber commissioned UNL's College of Journalism and Mass Communications to compose its 'Century 2012' magazine, commemorating the Chamber's 100th anniversary. As a token of appreciation, the State Chamber donated \$2,000 to the CoJMC's general scholarship fund. Pictured are (from left): Former State Chamber Chairman Rich Bailey, Joe Weber, Emily Sears, Griffin Jelinek, Emma Petrie-Smith, Kinsley Fisher and CoJMC Associate Professor Amy Struthers.



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

- Top Sponsors: Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Nebraska; ConAgra Foods.
- Platinum Level Sponsors: Dutton-Lainson Co.; Lincoln Industries; Nebraska Public Power District; U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
- Gold Level Sponsors: AFLAC; Black Hills Energy; Farmers Mutual Insurance; Gallup; Mid-Continent Technologies; Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Nelnet; NUCOR Steel; Pinnacle Bank; Source-Gas; Streck, Inc.; TransCanada; U.S. Bank; Union Pacific; Vetter Health Services.
- Silver Level Sponsors: Behlen Mfg. Co.; Cash-Wa Distributing; Catterton Partners; Children's Hospital & Medical Center; Duncan Aviation; Great Plains Communications; Husch Blackwell, LLP; Knudsen Law Firm; Nebraska Diplomats; Omaha Chamber of Commerce; Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co.; Pfizer; Reinke Mfg.; Valmont Industries; Wells Fargo.



# 2012 Nebraska Business Hall of Fame

2012 inductees Bob Milligan, Chairman of pet food manufacturer MI Industries in Lincoln, and his wife, Cynthia, former dean of UNL's College of Business Administration, are the first husband-wife duo to be inducted in the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame.

Joining this year's list of Business Hall of Fame inductees was Omaha philanthropist John Gottschalk, who was recognized for his many years as CEO of the Omaha World-Herald.

Eldon Roth, founder and president of BPI Technology, Inc., and his wife, Regina, accept the 2012 Nebraska Business Hall of Fame Award from Governor Heineman.

Accepting the Business Hall of Fame Award on behalf of her husband, Gretchen Lainson spoke about how proud her husband would be and how he valued his role with the State Chamber. She also noted that Hal Lainson was born in 1912, the same year the State Chamber was founded.

