

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

April/May 2008

State Chamber Goes To D.C.

The State Chamber's annual visit to Washington, D.C. was held April 22-23. Twenty State Chamber members attended the three-day function, which included the weekly Nebraska breakfast on Capitol Hill, as well as policy briefings from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). Topics included energy policy; the "card check" bill addressing labor union organization; immigration; foreign trade agreements; and possible changes coming to the Family Medical Leave Act.

Highlights of this year's visit included a congressional luncheon with Nebraska's senators, congressmen, and their staffs. Sponsored by the Nebraska Public Power District, the luncheon allowed the opportunity for State Chamber members to hear directly from Nebraska's congressional delegation on issues affecting the business community. Participants also were treated to an evening reception at the Washington offices of Husch Blackwell Sanders LLP, where participants visited with congressional staff members from Nebraska.

At the Nebraska breakfast, State Chamber members heard from Senator Ben Nelson and Representatives Lee Terry, Jeff Fortenberry and Adrian Smith. Later that day, State Chamber members had a private meeting with Senator Chuck Hagel. The congressional delegation provided thorough updates on key legislation pending in both the Senate and House of Representatives. ■



Members of the State Chamber delegation near the White House following the policy briefing at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.



Nebraska 3rd District Congressman Adrian Smith meets with State Chamber Chairman Lee Glenn and other State Chamber members during the traditional Nebraska Breakfast at the U.S. Capitol.

Senator Hagel updates the State Chamber delegation on challenges facing the nation and policymakers.

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
Editor: Jamie Karl





State Chamber Views...

Editorial by Barry L. Kennedy

President,

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

"Take Time To Educate Candidates, Senators"

Implementation of Nebraska's legislative term limit law is making a dramatic turnover of state senators in Nebraska. There were 22 new senators elected in 2006, and there will be at least 15 new senators elected this November.

This high turnover rate can be viewed as a challenge. The process of getting to know each of the newly-elected senators and making sure they understand the issues that affect your ability to grow and prosper in Nebraska certainly takes more time and effort.

On the other hand, a high turnover rate in the Legislature can be an opportunity if you are willing to work toward educating new Senators about your business and the impact you have on your employees and community.

Let me suggest that this challenge and opportunity can be met by doing the following:

1. Take time to meet with the candidates in your area and the newly-elected senators to explain to them why it is important to support business-friendly issues. If they are not already familiar with your operation, explain to them what government-imposed cost and regulations concern you most.

They may, or may not, fully understand the impact of taxes, health care cost, unemployment cost, workers' comp cost and all the other compliance issues that you face while trying to keep your business competitive and growing.

2. Invite them to visit your place of business. Whether you are a manufacturer, a service provider, a financial institution, construction company, communication specialist, retailer, medical services provider, transportation company, wholesaler, educational services or one of the many other types

of companies that make up Nebraska's business community, elected officials need to have your input.

Be sure to walk them through your facility so they see firsthand what exactly goes on within your business. Let them meet and visit with some of your employees so they know the kind of jobs you have created in your area. Inform them of any benefits that you provide for your valued employees.

Things like health care coverage, continuing education and training opportunities, and leave and vacation policies that are not mandated by state or federal government.

When elected officials truly understand the obstacles that face your business on a day-to-day basis, they can then better represent your interest as those issues arise.

In addition, when they know firsthand that you are being a good corporate citizen and trying to provide quality career opportunities and a safe work environment for your employees, they will be less likely to over-react when stories of bad actors cause an onerous piece of legislation to be introduced.

Elected officials have a responsibility to make an effort to obtain as much factual information about an issue as possible before making an informed vote on that issue. As employers in Nebraska, we also must accept a responsibility to make every effort possible to assure they understand our positions and have factual information.

The best way to accomplish this is by developing a personal relationship with our policy makers during their campaign and maintain it throughout the time period they serve in a particular office. When you need to contact a seated senator about an issue of importance to you, it is always

easier to talk to someone you know, than it is to someone you don't know. It is also easier for them to understand your position if they are familiar with your operation.

Please consider taking some time to invite a candidate or elected official to tour your business and to show them firsthand your concerns and what you are trying to do to sustain good jobs in your community. You have nothing to lose, and the benefits could prove significant for both you and Nebraska's business economy in general. ■

Help Us Grow Your State Chamber Of Commerce

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry has successfully represented the state's employers for more than 96 years. Today, the State Chamber is at its strongest level ever – with record membership, major legislative accomplishments, and a strong record of service to Nebraska's employers and their businesses. Your State Chamber has earned the reputation of being the most effective advocate of the state's business community, but to expand our influence and compete with opposing interests, we must expand our membership base to make the Chamber's voice even more influential.

Please take a moment and let us know of businesses and individuals you know who would benefit from the services provided by the State Chamber. Enclosed with this issue of *The Executive* is a form to help us identify new member prospects.

By providing us with the names of potential new members, you will help us grow your State Chamber. And that is essential to ensure our organization's continued success throughout the next 96 years. ■

State Chamber Welcomes Two New Board Members

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry recently welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors. The new board members were approved by the Executive Council on March 14.

Chad Denton of Omaha was approved as chairman of the State Chamber's Economic Development Council. Denton is president of CFO Services of Boys Town. In addition to his years of experience in providing economic development assistance to companies and organizations nationwide, Denton played a key role in the development of the 2005 Nebraska Advantage Act, the state's foremost economic development program. He is also a graduate of Leadership Omaha and is a founding member of the Young Professional Council of the Greater



Chad Denton

Omaha Chamber of Commerce. **John M. Childears** of North Platte was approved as a director of District VI. Childears is co-owner and president of Agri Affiliates, Inc. of North Platte. He is an accredited rural appraiser who has been with Agri Affiliates since 1985. As company broker, appraiser and auctioneer, Childears is responsible for the company's daily operation, including sales, appraisals, and management of farm and ranch real estate in five states. "The State Chamber is proud to have two more highly-qualified Nebraskans join its leadership ranks," said State Chamber President Barry L. Kennedy. ■



John M. Childears

Registration will begin at 7:45 a.m. Reservations are requested. Please see the enclosed flyer or e-mail cvolnek@nechamber.com. ■

Manufacturers' Council Meeting Set for May 14

The State Chamber Manufacturers' Council will sponsor a special meeting for all Chamber members on Wednesday, May 14, at Quarry Oaks Golf Course near Ashland. The program will begin at 8:30 a.m. with an update from Lieutenant Governor Rick Sheehy on issues affecting the state's manufacturers. Attendees will also hear from executives with RSM McGladrey consulting firm and Bill Canis from NAM on how small- and medium-sized manufacturers can thrive in today's global economy.

The program also features an informational session on Reinke Manufacturing's partnership with Deshler Public Schools to provide a modern welding technology program for students and adults. The program will conclude at 11 a.m., following the Innovation Award ceremony.

Registration will begin at 7:45 a.m. Reservations are requested. Please see the enclosed flyer or e-mail cvolnek@nechamber.com. ■

Senators, Governor Approve LB888, LB895

State Chamber members and staff took part in signing ceremonies for two important pieces of legislation enacted this session. The first bill, LB888, provides tax relief to Nebraska corporations by raising the threshold of the state's higher corporate tax bracket, from \$50,000 to \$100,000. LB888 was sponsored by Senator Carroll Burling of Kenesaw and prioritized by Senator Scott Lautenbaugh of Omaha. The other key piece of legislation, LB895, is known as the Nebraska Super Advantage. Prioritized by Senator Tim Gay of Papillion and introduced by Senator Ray Janssen of Nickerson, LB895 provides new incentives to companies that create high-paying jobs. Both bills were priority measures for the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Pictured above is State Chamber President Barry L. Kennedy – along with Governor Dave Heineman, Tax Commissioner Doug Ewald, and Senators Pete Pirsch, Burling, Lautenbaugh and Gay – following the signing of LB888. ■



Registration will begin at 7:45 a.m. Reservations are requested. Please see the enclosed flyer or e-mail cvolnek@nechamber.com. ■



More D.C. Photos

Left: State Chamber President Barry Kennedy talks with Nebraska 2nd District Congressman Lee Terry before the Nebraska Breakfast.



Right: Nebraska's 1st District Congressman Jeff Fortenberry discusses business-related legislation with State Chamber Immediate Past Chairman Tom Whalen.

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.

BRILLION, WI

Ariens Company
Patrick Johnston

HEBRON

Blue Valley Foods
Gwenael Spilmont

Husker Access

Dushyant A. Patel

P&L Capital Corp. Inc.

Phil Lieber

CALGARY, ALBERTA CANADA

TransCanada Keystone
Pipeline
Nicole Aitken

HEMINGFORD

Hemingford Co-Operative
Telephone Company
Joni Jespersen

Industrial Services, Inc.

Lori Knaub

Right Management Inc.

David Hughes

ELKHORN

UFO, Inc. (Arby's)
James Kopsa
*Sponsor: Larry Kopsa,
Kopsa Otte + Associates,
LLC, CPA's*

KEARNEY

Investment Property
Exchange Inc.
Stephen R. England

Land and Sky Manufac- turing

Ronald L. Larson

Roberts Dairy Company

Robert N. Walker

Safarik Enterprises

Ron Safarik
*Sponsor: Mitch Arnold,
MoveBackToNebraska.com*

GENOA

Preferred Rocks of
Genoa
Richard Kibbe

Killion Motors, Inc.

Loren Killion

Larsen, Bryant & Associates, P.C.

Robert Bryant

Jacob North Companies

Charles D. Calhoun

TransFirst epayment Services, Inc.

Mike Phelan

Don Wesely

NORFOLK

The Day Companies
Sue Fuchtman

PAWNEE CITY

SchillingBridge Winery &
Microbrewery
Mike & Sharon Schilling

GRAND ISLAND

Island Landhandlers, Inc.
Gerald Williams
*Sponsor: Rod Hooker,
Hooker Brothers Sand &
Gravel, Inc.*

Xpanxion Nebraska

Lance Rall
*Sponsor: Mitch Arnold,
MoveBackToNebraska.com*

NORTH PLATTE

AJ Sheet Metal, Inc.
Todd Bissell

PLATTSMOUTH

Cass County Bank
Doug Duey

The Grand Island

Independent
Donald S. Smith

KIMBALL

Kimball CO-OP Food Store
John Morrison

Mid-Plains Community

College
Dr. Michael Chipps

WAYNE

First National Bank of
Wayne
Kent Franzen

HASTINGS

Carmichael Construction,
L.L.C.
Dale Hamburger
*Sponsor: Jack A.
Schreiner, Bruckman
Rubber Company*

LaVISTA

Computerz and More
Linda Daniel

OMAHA

COMC, LLC/dba
SnapStone
Jonathan McIntosh
Sponsor: J. Paul McIntosh

YORK

York Equipment, Inc.
Steve Ermer
*Sponsor: Larry Kopsa, Kopsa
Otte + Associates, LLC,
CPA's*

LEWISVILLE, TX

Verizon Wireless
David Armev
*Sponsor: Curt Bromm,
Edstrom, Bromm, Lindahl &
Freeman-Caddy*

Keynote Publishing

Jeff Beals

LINCOLN

Deonne Bruning, PC, LLO
Deonne Bruning