

Nebraska's Economic Development Future

Over 100 State Chamber members attended the May 25 Manufacturers Council Meeting at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. The program featured a presentation on the KPMG Economic Development Study, which will be the basis for future work on economic development legislation for Nebraska. State Chamber members helped underwrite the study. Afterwards, Richard E. "Dick" Dauch, the current chairman of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), made an excellent presentation regarding manufacturing in America. NAM is at the lead of proposing policies that promote a healthy manufacturing sector and strong, long-term economic growth. Dauch is co-founder, chairman and chief executive officer of American Axle & Manufacturing in Detroit, MI. ■



Richard E. "Dick" Dauch and Tony Raimondo.

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Washington, D.C. Visit

The annual State Chamber Washington visit was held May 3-5. Some 15 State Chamber members attended the three-day function, which included the weekly Nebraska Breakfast, our Congressional Luncheon, and briefings from the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the State Chamber coordinated with the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce Fly-In, which included a dinner honoring Kawasaki Manufacturing, a reception at the Gallup Organization's World Headquarters and a White House Briefing.

On May 3, the group heard from U.S. Chamber President Tom Donahue and had a presentation on the highway bill. Later that morning, members went to the Old Executive Building for a timely presentation on the Administration's views on the economy and education issues.

On May 4, the group heard from Fred Nichols of NAM on key federal issues affecting manufacturers and business in general, as well as Bill Canis of the Manufacturing Institute regarding the Manufacturing Campaign. Later that day, Congressman Doug Bereuter and staff members, as well as Senators Ben Nelson and Chuck Hagel and staff members, joined the State Chamber and Lincoln Chamber delegations for the annual Congressional Luncheon. The Nebraska Congressional delegation gave excellent updates on current federal issues. Over 50 people attended the luncheon.

At the Nebraska breakfast, Senators Ben Nelson and Chuck Hagel, and Congressmen Lee Terry, Tom Osborne, and Doug Bereuter made brief remarks. Local chambers from Bellevue, Omaha, Fremont, Columbus, Lincoln, Seward, and Scottsbluff/Gering attended the Washington visit. ■



Top left: Members of the State Chamber delegation and Lincoln Chamber Fly-In at the U.S. Chamber briefing. Below left: U.S. Chamber President Tom Donahue, Duane Acklie, Barry Kennedy, Jim Fram, and John Wood after the briefing. Bottom right: Senator Nelson, Cong. Osborne, Senator Hagel, and Cong. Terry at the Nebraska breakfast. (More Photos on Page 3.)





State Chamber Views...

*Editorial by James Berringer,
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“The Importance of Membership”

The chief objective of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry is to ensure that Nebraska state legislators, as well as the Governor and state agencies, are well informed on legislative and regulatory issues that affect business, industry, and the economy as a whole. The State Chamber is the only statewide broad-based business association that represents the business community before the Legislature.

Your local chamber represents your interests in the community, your trade association represents specific industry-trade issues, and your State Chamber represents broad-based, statewide issues that affect your bottom line. We work hard on basic and common issues that affect every business' livelihood — issues that affect your ability to profit and grow: Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Economic Incentives, Taxes, Liability Insurance, Workplace Regulations, Mandates, Environmental Regulations.

In order to keep our members well informed, the State Chamber produces the weekly *Legislative Report*, which updates the members on issues of interest during the legislative session. A summary of key legislative issues addressed in each session and a “How They Voted” brochure keep members up to date on the issues and how their state senator voted on key business issues. State Chamber members who are Political Action Council members help fund the state's largest business PAC, dedicated strictly to state legislative races.

Members also receive the Chamber's monthly newsletter, the *Executive*, the annual membership directory and various reference books

on specific issues that help Nebraska businesses comply with laws and regulations. We offer various councils and seminars to share information and updates on new laws and compliance issues.

In addition, we have formed partnerships with others to benefit our members:

Compensation Data is a company we work with to provide pay and benefit analysis of Nebraska employers. This publication will inform you what the average pay and benefit package should be for any of your employees. If you know you're paying your employees the norm, they're less likely to run to the competition for more pay.

HR Comply/Ceridian is a Human Resource Solution Center that provides the latest on HR information that will help keep you in compliance. They offer updated compliance publications to help keep your personnel staff educated on new laws.

Hertz Car Rental discounts are a big plus for the business traveler. You don't need to carry a membership card. The only thing you need to say is, “I'm a member of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry. What are my discounts today?”

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry is your statewide business organization that provides a valuable service for a fee. We know that running your business is more than a full-time job for you and your employees. As members, you have ownership in an organization that is working with leaders like you in making a better Nebraska. The great value of your membership is that by pooling resources and information, our ability to have a positive impact is

greatly enhanced.

It's only fair that your competitors, friends and neighbors help contribute to a better Nebraska for all! When the opportunity arises, please recommend State Chamber membership to other business associates. There is strength in numbers, and the larger our membership base, the stronger our voice will be! ■

Federal Labor Standards Act Workshop Set for June 16

New white collar exemption requirements and overtime pay requirements have been changed by the U.S. Department of Labor. What employers need to know about these regulations will be the focus of a FLSA REGS Workshop on June 16 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. The afternoon workshop will provide practical explanations on the new overtime guidelines. Attorneys Bill Harding and Jack Shultz of Harding, Shultz & Downs will be the presenters. Further details are enclosed with this issue of the Executive, or call Charlie Volnek at the State Chamber. ■



State Chamber Chairman Rick Russell addresses dinner attendees at the May Board meeting held atop the new First National Bank Tower in Omaha.

Fall Legislative Forums In Your Area

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry needs to hear from you this fall as we visit 29 Nebraska communities for our annual Legislative Forums during the weeks of September 13-17, September 20-22, and September 27-29 and October 6. Below are dates and locations of the 2004 State Chamber Fall Legislative Forums.

This is your opportunity to tell us what's on your mind regarding legislation and to visit with your state senators and candidates who are invited to all Forums in their districts.

Times and dates will be finalized by the local chambers of commerce who host the Forums in their community and handle reservations. A listing of complete locations will be published in the July/August *Executive*. State Chamber elected leaders and executive staff members will be present to discuss issues and answer questions.

Surveys have shown that employers are well regarded by their employees as a good source of information on elections and issues affecting their jobs and lifestyles. The Forums are a great opportunity to give key employees a firsthand look at the legislative process, learn the issues, and meet their elected representatives. For more information, please contact the State Chamber office.

Monday, Sept. 13	Lunch	Aurora
Tuesday, Sept. 14	Breakfast Lunch Dinner	McCook Grand Island Columbus
Wednesday, Sept. 15	Breakfast Lunch	York Ord
Thursday, Sept. 16	Breakfast Lunch	Lincoln Fremont
Friday, Sept. 17	Lunch	Hastings

Monday, Sept. 20	Lunch Lunch Dinner	O'Neill Holdrege Norfolk
Tuesday, Sept. 21	Breakfast Breakfast Lunch Lunch	Kearney Wayne S. Sioux City Lexington
Wednesday, Sept. 22	Breakfast Lunch Lunch	Omaha Bellevue Nebraska City
Monday, Sept. 27	Breakfast Lunch Lunch Dinner	Beatrice Broken Bow Gretna Ogallala
Tuesday, Sept. 28	Breakfast Lunch Lunch Dinner	Alliance Scottsbluff Blair Sidney
Wednesday, Sept. 29	Breakfast	North Platte
Wednesday, Oct. 6	Lunch	Wahoo



Top Right: Cong. Doug Bereuter makes a point at the Congressional luncheon. **Right:** Senator Ben Nelson shares a story at the luncheon. **Bottom left:** Local chamber executives at the White House briefing (1 to r) Dacia Kruse, Omaha; Bruce Bohrer, Lincoln; Karen Anderson, Scottsbluff-Gering; Jim Fram, Lincoln; Barry Kennedy; Pat Coldiron, Seward; Allan Hale, Fremont; Megan Lucas, Bellevue; Marie Owen, McCook; and K.C. Belitz, Columbus.



May Primary Election Results

May 11 was the date of the Nebraska Primary election. Nine of the 25 races had three or more candidates and the top finishers are as follows: Dist. 1, Open Seat, Ron Zeiger (41%) and Lavon Heidemann (33%); Dist. 3, Sen. Ray Mossey (42%) and Gail Kopplin (36%); Dist. 9, Open Seat, Gwen Howard (43%) and Scott Knudsen (32%); Dist. 17, Sen. Pat Engel (53%) and Dave Bloomfield (28%); Dist. 23, Open Seat, Chris Langemeier (50%) and Mark Gustafson (41%); Dist. 31, Open Seat, Rich Pahls (49%) and Ben Thompson (32%); Dist. 33, Steve Scherr (48%) and Sen. Carroll Burling (47%); Dist. 43, Open Seat, Kevin Cooksley (26%) and Deb Fischer (25%); and Dist. 45, Open Seat, Abbie Cornett (43%) and Kirk Brumbaugh (27%).

Remaining districts with two candidates are: Dist. 13, Sen. Lowen Kruse (71%) and Anthony Fast Horse (29%); Dist. 29, Sen. Mike Foley (72%) and Angelika Byorth (28%); Dist. 37, Sen. Joel Johnson (78%) and Mike McShea (22%).

Districts with only one candidate are: Dist. 5, Sen. Don Preister; Dist. 7, Sen. John Synowiecki; Dist. 11, Sen. Ernie Chambers; Dist. 15, Sen. Ray Janssen; Dist. 19, Mike Flood; Dist. 21, Sen. Carol Hudkins; Dist. 25, Sen. Ron

Raikes; Dist. 27, Sen. DiAnna Schimek; Dist. 35, Sen. Ray Aguilar; Dist. 39, Sen. Dwite Pedersen; Dist. 41, Sen. Vickie McDonald; Dist. 47, Sen. Philip Erdman; and Dist. 49, Sen. LeRoy Louden.

On the federal side, the open First District Congressional seat will see former Lincoln Councilman Jeff Fortenberry face Senator Matt Connealy in November. Fortenberry won a crowded Republican Primary race with 39%, besting Speaker Curt Bromm's 33%. Democrat Connealy took just over 50% in a three-person race. Senator Nancy Thompson (D) is running against incumbent Lee Terry in the Second Congressional District. Third District Congressman Tom Osborne has token opposition. The General election is November 2, 2004. A complete listing of results from the Primary elections for the Unicameral and the Congressional seats is enclosed.

The State Chamber encourages all members to look at the Vote For Business in 2004 link on our website. The dismal 21% voter turnout in this year's Primary speaks volumes about the importance of employers and employees voting and knowing the candidates and where they stand.

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 is 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; display and listing of Cornerstone members at various meetings and in membership mailings; 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:

AFLAC	First National Bank
Alltel	Kellogg Company
Altria Corporate Services	Lincoln Benefit Life
Ameritas Acacia Companies	Mutual of Omaha
Avaya	Nebraska Cable
Becton Dickinson	Nebraska Public
Blue Cross & Blue Shield	Power District
Burlington Northern Santa Fe	Novartis Consumer Health
Cabela's	Paypal
Chief Industries	Pinnacle Bank
ConAgra Foods	Tyson/IBP Foods
Cornerstone Bank	Union Pacific
Douglas Manufacturing	Vetter Health Services
First Data	Werner Enterprises

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