

Washington, D.C. Visit

The annual State Chamber Washington visit was held May 2-4, 2006. Some 23 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. Local chambers were represented from Bellevue, Columbus, Lincoln, West Point, Gothenburg, and Scottsbluff/Gering.

On May 2, the group heard from Patricia Long of NAM on key federal issues affecting manufacturers and business in general. Key legislation to

open drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf was touted as one way to help ease high oil prices.

At the Nebraska Breakfast, May 3, Senator Ben Nelson and Congressmen Lee Terry and Jeff Fortenberry made brief remarks and introduced the State Chamber group and the large (11) Columbus Chamber contingent. Later that day, Congressmen Jeff Fortenberry, Lee Terry and staff members, as well as Senators Ben Nelson and Chuck Hagel and staff members, joined the State Chamber and a delegation from the Federal Home Loan Bank, Topeka. FHLB was the sponsor of this year's luncheon. The Nebraska Congressional delegation gave

excellent updates on current federal issues. Over 45 people attended the luncheon. We also had the opportunity to make individual visits to the office of Senator Nelson.

Later that afternoon, the group had a briefing at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce headquarters, with topics focusing on taxes, energy, health care and trade. ■



Top: State Chamber delegation at U.S. Chamber briefing. **Far left:** Cong. Lee Terry, Barry Kennedy, and State Chamber Chairman Rich Bailey at the Nebraska Breakfast. **Left:** FHLB Topeka President Andy Jetter, Bailey and Kennedy before the Congressional Luncheon. **Bottom left:** Bellevue Chamber delegation and Cong. Terry. **Below:** Group pose in the Daniel Webster Room at U.S. Chamber Building.



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State Chamber Views...

Guest Editorial by Rich Bailey
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"Washington Trip, Leadership Thoughts"

There are two items I'd like to share with you in this editorial. First involves the recent State Chamber Washington visit that is detailed on page 1 of this issue. For a number of years, the State Chamber has organized a Washington visit and Congressional luncheon to help our members keep up with federal issues and continue the excellent relations we have with our Congressional delegation. Last month, I participated in this year's trip. We planned our trip to be in our nation's capital on Wednesday morning to participate in the weekly Nebraska Congressional Breakfast, a tradition that began in 1945. The Nebraska Congressional Breakfast is the oldest ongoing gathering of its kind on Capitol Hill. Each week when Congress is in session, all Nebraskans visiting Washington and their guests are invited.

We took advantage of being "on the Hill" to visit some of our delegation's offices. Other participants made a point of setting up appointments with their congressman and staff for their local and regional issues. The Columbus Chamber's delegation has made these trips often, and they credit the visits over the years toward helping the region get the funding for their arterial road project—one that benefits not only the business community but the entire area. The Bellevue Chamber also had a delegation, and other chamber execs saw the value of such trips.

Later that day, more than 40 people participated in our Congressional Luncheon, sponsored this year by Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka. Due to the hectic pace and uncertain times for voting, our delega-

tion participated in our luncheon between meetings, speeches, and votes. However, the time we had with the members and their staff, as well as the opportunity to ask questions, was quality time.

During our visit, we had excellent presentations from the staff of the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, giving us updates on the progress of energy legislation, taxation, health care, and trade issues. As many of you know, the State Chamber works closely with the Nebraska Congressional delegation on federal issues of concern to business.

I urge you to take advantage of the willingness of your delegation to help you on an issue, to provide the proper information on federal concerns, and to hear your views.

Suffice it to say that these trips are well worth the effort. I urge you to take advantage of the willingness of your delegation to help you on an issue, to provide the proper information on federal concerns, and to hear your views. While I gained a better perspective of the State Chamber's activities on the federal side during our trip, I also realized that one trip generally is not enough. Plan to put next year's visit on your agenda. You'll have a new found appreciation for the State Chamber's strong role and influence.

We're moving along swiftly with the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program. Chairman Bob

Harris and his team are doing a great job in planning for our first class beginning next year. The Council has met to begin establishing the curricula, develop a timeline, and establish a selection process. I think you know that many of your local chambers have very effective leadership programs that help to meet the demand for qualified people to accept leadership roles in various sectors of their communities. There is a high demand for training to develop skills and talents that will prepare people to move into statewide or regional leadership roles. We believe the creation of a statewide program is a natural step forward especially for graduates of community-based programs.

First, we want to give participants a wide range of experiences and insights that focus on the issues and challenges facing Nebraska. Through this enhanced awareness, the program will equip future leaders to better appreciate and understand the condition of the entire state. The success of the program, both near and long term, will lie with the graduates and their determination to take their experiences to improve the good life of Nebraska. There will be program components to both track progress and maintain communication with Leadership Nebraska alumni to assure that the program is meeting its goals.

As for the format of the program, the focus will be on leadership development by advancing candidates' leadership qualities and broadening their understanding of and involvement in issues and opportunities facing our state. The program is aimed at persons who have already demonstrated community and professional leadership interests. We plan to offer six 1½-day to 2-day sessions per year that will give class members an opportunity to develop and hone leadership skills and gain a broader understanding of issues facing Nebraska, with a focus on topical areas such as Economic Devel-

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Washington Trip, Leadership Thoughts

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opment, Agriculture/Environment, Government/Politics, Workforce Development and Education, and Health/Human Services. Each session will be in a different community across the state, coordinating with community leaders on dates and topics.

Now is a critical time for your input. Subcommittees are forming to detail and plan the six sessions for our inaugural class beginning next year. If you have any thoughts or ideas about the program, please do not hesitate to make your thoughts known to either our volunteer or staff leadership of the State Chamber. We will begin soliciting participants later this year, and we need to have a first-class program to offer.

We also need your help financially. We are soliciting grants and commitments to ensure the success of this program. As a tax-deductible endeavor, the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program is an excellent way to help provide for the future of our state and its citizens by continuing Nebraska's tradition of providing leadership and the vision to continue to grow our state. We'll value your strong support. ■

May Primary Election Update

With a voter turnout of 35%, Nebraskans have narrowed the field for political offices. Twenty-one Districts will be choosing new Senators this year due to term limits. In addition, Senator Mike Foley (Dist. 29) is running for State Auditor and could resign his legislative seat if he is elected in November. There were over 80 candidates for the Unicameral on the May 9 Primary Election. The top two vote-getters proceed to the General Election on November 7. In District 44, a recount will be necessary to determine the second-place finisher.

In addition, Senator Jeanne Combs, the primary election winner in District 32, will leave office in December and is taking her name off the General Election ballot. She indicated that a new job will not allow her to serve in the Unicameral. Candidates may petition on the ballot until September 1.

An energetic Republican primary race for Governor, Third District Congressman, and the U.S. Senate also served to bring voters out. Governor Dave Heineman will face Lincoln Democrat businessman David Hahn on the November ballot. Gering State Senator Adrian Smith and Democrat rancher Scott Kleeb will vie for the open Third District Congressional seat. Former Ameritrade executive Pete

Ricketts won the GOP nomination and will face incumbent Sen. Ben Nelson for the U.S. Senate seat.

The State's Constitutional officers are all up for election this year as well. A complete listing of candidates is enclosed.

The State Chamber is again working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to activate and energize business and employees for the elections. It's called VoteForNebraska.com, a web-based employee education program designed to engage you in the 2006 elections. VoteForNebraska.com enables you to easily register to vote, get absentee ballots, and to educate yourself on state and federal candidates—all from a single website.

Make sure you and your employees are ready to participate in the Primary and General Elections and log onto VoteForNebraska.com. If you find that you are in a legislative district that is up for election this year (all of the even-numbered districts), you may want to take an additional step. Make yourself known to and become acquainted with the people in your district who are running for the Nebraska Legislature. Invite them to visit your place of business and see firsthand the economic impact that you are making in your community. ■



Spring Board Meeting Photos

Left to right: State Chamber Board met in Lincoln May 18-19. Golfers Gayle McClure and Glenda and Dennis Boesiger enjoyed a beautiful day. Golf winners Tom Whalen and Brian Hamilton with Barry Kennedy. Pre-dinner discussion at Lincoln Country Club. Chairman Bailey at Friday Board Meeting.



Fall Legislative Forums In Your Area

Voters this fall will elect 24 State Senators, with at least 21 new members from across the state. The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry needs to hear from you this fall as we visit over 30 Nebraska communities for our annual Legislative Forums during the weeks of September 11-13, September 19-22, September 25-28, and dates in early October. Below are tentative dates and locations of the 2006 State Chamber Fall Legislative Forums.

This is your opportunity to compare the candidates, tell us what's on your mind regarding legislation, and to visit with your state senators who are invited to all Forums in their districts. With so many new Senators to be elected, it is more important than ever for the business community to know the candidates and issues before the November election.

Time and location will be finalized by your local chamber of commerce who host and handle reservations for the Forum in their community. 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 your 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. Locations in italics have an election this year with the District next to the community.

Monday, Sept. 11	Breakfast Lunch Dinner	<i>Beatrice (30)</i> <i>Aurora (34)</i> Hastings
Tuesday, Sept. 12	Breakfast Lunch	<i>McCook (44)</i> Grand Island
Wednesday, Sept. 13	Lunch	<i>Columbus (22)</i> <i>Holdrege (38)</i>

Tuesday, Sept. 19	Lunch Dinner	<i>O'Neill (40)</i> Norfolk?
Wednesday, Sept. 20	Breakfast Lunch	<i>York (24)</i> <i>West Point (16)</i> Fremont <i>Lexington (36)</i>
Thursday, Sept. 21	Breakfast	<i>Crete (32)</i>
Friday, Sept. 22	Breakfast Lunch	<i>Omaha (4, 10, 12)</i> South Sioux City <i>Omaha (6, 8, 20)</i>

Monday, Sept. 25	Breakfast Lunch	Kearney <i>Gothenburg (36)</i>
Tuesday, Sept. 26	Breakfast Lunch Dinner	Ogallala <i>Scottsbluff (48)</i> <i>Blair (18)</i> Sidney
Wednesday, Sept. 27	Breakfast Lunch	<i>North Platte (42)</i> <i>Cozad (36)</i> <i>Nebraska City (2)</i>
Thursday, Sept. 28	Breakfast Lunch	<i>Papillion (14)</i> Valentine

Tuesday, Oct. 3	Lunch	Tecumseh
Wednesday, Oct. 4	Breakfast Lunch	<i>Lincoln (26, 28, 46)</i> Wahoo
Wednesday, Oct. 18	Lunch	Bellevue

Hertz Card For Member Savings

Enclosed with this issue of the *Executive* is your Nebraska Chamber Hertz Member Savings Card. Discounts can be a one car class upgrade, \$10 off a weekly rental, up to \$15 off a weekend rental, or a free child seat on a weekly rental. The Hertz card is one of the benefits you receive as a State Chamber member. You can visit hertz.com, call your travel agent, or call Hertz at 1-800-654-2210. ■

2006 Membership Directory

By now you may have had an opportunity to look through your new 2006 State Chamber Membership and Business Directory. Again this year, we remind you to notice the businesses listed and support them with your continued patronage. Our Membership Department has been busier than ever with recruiting, but we can always use your help. The success of the State Chamber and the prospering business climate in Nebraska comes from a strong membership base. Your efforts to encourage business peers to join in membership are the most effective form of recruitment. Please take a few more minutes to review your Directory and look for those businesses you are familiar with that are not listed. Let them know that ALL businesses in Nebraska benefit from the work of the State Chamber. This is solely attributed to those members who faithfully pay their dues. Please let us know of solid prospects you would recommend for membership by returning the referral sheet we have enclosed, so that we may follow up on your leads. ■