

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER 
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry
June 2008

Scottsbluff/Gering Host State Chamber Board Meeting

On June 5 and 6, the State Chamber Board of Directors gathered for its summer meeting in Scotts Bluff County.

On the evening of Thursday, June 5, thirty board members enjoyed dinner at Tom and Donna Cozad's Antique Ford Garage and Coca-Cola Corner in Gering. The Cozads were recently featured on Home & Garden TV for their restoration of some of Gering's oldest commercial buildings.

Purchased by the Cozads in 1993, the refurbished city block is now home to an impressive compilation of restored antique cars and one of the most unique collections of Coke memorabilia anywhere in the country. The most recent addition to the Cozad's buildings is a full-sized movie theater, complete with restored seats from an old movie house and a handcrafted ticket box.

After touring the facilities and admiring Tom Cozad's detailed craftsmanship, State Chamber Board members were joined for dinner by several members of the Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce.

The June 6 board meeting was held at the newly-renovated John

Harms Advanced Technology Center, which is part of Western Community College. District 48 Senator John Harms of Scottsbluff addressed the board members, presenting a wide-ranging analysis of the challenges facing the state and its business sector. Before board members acted on official business, they briefed the senator and fellow attendees on the economic conditions in their respective industries.

During their stay, several board members took time to visit the Scotts Bluff National Monument, Wildcat Hills Recreation Area, Chimney Rock and other area attractions.

The State Chamber sends its appreciation to Chairman Lee Glenn and his wife, Deb; Tom and Donna Cozad; Western Community College; and Karen Anderson at the Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce for their hard work and hospitality. Because of their efforts, the time in Scotts Bluff County was both memorable and productive. ■



State Senator John Harms addresses the Board of Directors at the June 6 meeting held at Western Community College's Advanced Technology Center.



Board member Richard Reiser of Werner Enterprises and Robert Kelley of Kelley Bean Co. study the details of a Ford automobile from the 1930s.

Left: Leadership Nebraska Director Don Mihovk, State Chamber Vice President-General Counsel Ron Sedlacek, and Immediate Past Chairman Tom Whalen of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Nebraska examine one of the restored classics at Cozad's Antique Ford Garage.



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State Chamber Views...
Guest Editorial by Lee Glenn
Chairman of the Board,
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"Reflecting On The Need For A Strong State Chamber"

As I reach the midpoint of my term as chairman, the need for a strong, vibrant State Chamber becomes even more apparent. When I hear other members' views on the economy and the issues facing their local communities, I realize we all possess valuable information that can be used by other State Chamber members as they plan the course for their own businesses.

I have also recognized that our state - as much as any other - is part of the new global economy. All of our members are improving lives in America and around the world, whether it is through food production, communication, insurance, banking, manufacturing or any other economic sector represented by our organization.

As I have become more familiar with the State Chamber's diverse membership and the businesses represented by our organization, one fact has become abundantly clear: Nebraska's business community needs a unified voice to address the important issues before our elected leaders.

Scottsbluff Board Meeting

Earlier this month, several members of the State Chamber Board of Directors attended our summer meeting in Scottsbluff. It is my hope all our board members left with a better perspective of what drives the economy of the Panhandle, as well as the important things we are doing in the areas of job training, education and medical care. These efforts are, of course, in addition to Western Nebraska's contribution to agriculture - the state's "economic engine."

Board members saw firsthand that Western Nebraska businesses have the

same risks and concerns as their counterparts in the eastern half of the state. It is incumbent on all of us - regardless of our location - to do everything we can to create and maintain a sound business climate throughout Nebraska.

While many industries do have their own specific issues before the Legislature, we are all impacted by taxes, economic development incentives, job training and general labor law issues, such as workers' compensation programs. Better communication within the business community will help us to present a more unified voice in Nebraska.

D.C. Visit

The State Chamber's recent visit to Washington, D.C. was another vivid reminder of the sometimes not-so-silent partner we all have - the federal govern-

ment. During our time on Capitol Hill, we were able to speak with both Nebraska's senators and all three House members about the issues affecting us daily. Their insights on the Farm Bill and the nation's energy policy brought us up to speed on current legislation before both chambers of Congress. It was encouraging to see our representatives make themselves available for one-on-one questions from fellow Nebraskans.

The Washington trip also included updates from the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. One of the highlights was the briefing from Sara Farnsworth, chief of staff for the U.S. Chamber Institute for 21st Century Energy. She gave us a thorough picture of the energy crisis facing the United States. My personal take from Sara's briefing is that our country still lacks a national energy policy. Every day we defer implementing a concrete, multi-faceted energy plan, the closer our nation is to a day of reckoning.

I would encourage every State Chamber member to make the Washington, D.C. trip in the future. It is well organized by the State Chamber's professional staff, and it provides members a real insight into our legislative process. It is also a great opportunity for personal contact with our elected representatives. ■



State Chamber Chairman Lee Glenn of Kelley Bean Co. and President Barry Kennedy meet with Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson during the State Chamber's recent visit to Washington, D.C.

Nebraska Ranked Second In Study Of States' Legal Climates

The U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform (ILR) has released its 2008 study showing that Nebraska has the second-best legal climate in the country. Nebraska improves its standing from 2007, when it was ranked No. 3 in the ILR study.

Delaware ranks first among all fifty states in the fairness of its litigation environment, a position it has held for seven consecutive years. West Virginia was rated last.

The annual assessment of state liability systems is conducted by the non-partisan polling firm Harris Interactive. The Harris survey is considered the pre-eminent standard

by which companies, policymakers and the media measure the legal environment of states.

The ILR/Harris rankings are based on a nationwide survey of 957 executives on issues ranging from a state's basic litigation costs, to punitive damage reform, unnecessary lawsuits and the speed of the trial process.

Tom Donohue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, noted that Delaware edged Nebraska by only 0.2 points in the raw score. Last year, Delaware's margin over the runner-up was 5 points.

"The survey results send a clear

message to states whose legal climate drives away businesses, jobs, and economic development. If you want a healthy state economy, clean up your act," Lisa Rickard, ILR president, said in a statement. A recent actuarial study estimated the annual cost of the tort system in America to be \$261 billion, or \$880 per citizen.

ILR is currently launching a national advertising campaign highlighting the results of the study and the need for comprehensive legal reform. For more information, visit ILR's Website at <http://www.instituteforlegalreform.com>. ■

Leadership Nebraska Forming Third Class

The application process for the third class of Leadership Nebraska is underway. The program is patterned after many local and some 30 state leadership programs and is designed to educate and train participants to better understand Nebraska and the issues facing its citizens. The 2008 class is midway through this year's sessions and will soon join the members of Class I as leaders of their communities, organizations and the state.

"Leadership Nebraska gives class members an opportunity to develop and hone leadership skills," said Bob Harris, chairman of the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska Council. The key to this forward-looking program begins with the premise that all citizens across the state have a stake in our future.

Sessions for the 2009 Leadership Nebraska class will begin with an orientation retreat at Arbor Lodge in February; a session on public service in Lincoln in March; an education session in Kearney in May; the economic development session in June; the agriculture session in O'Neill in August; and the healthcare/human services session in Hastings in September. A commencement

ceremony will be held in Lincoln in October.

Leadership Nebraska is once again seeking candidates from across the state and from both the private and public sectors. Candidates should have a record of elected, volunteer or community service.

The ongoing success of the program will be closely tied to the quality of our participants. All State Chamber members are asked to consider nominating or urging one or

more candidates to apply today. Employees and executives with member businesses are especially encouraged to apply. The application deadline is November 1, 2008.

Additional information is available at www.statechamberleadershipnebraska.com - including a copy of the application form - or by contacting Executive Director Don Mihovk at (402) 474-4422 or dmihovk@nechamber.com. ■



Pictured are the members of the 2008 Leadership Nebraska class during the public service session held in Lincoln in February.

Milligan To Serve As U.S. Chamber's Next Chairman



The State Chamber has learned that Nebraska businessman Robert S. Milligan of Lincoln has been elected to serve as the new vice chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Milligan is chairman of M I Industries, a Lincoln company that produces natural pet foods and treats.

Traditionally, the vice chairman succeeds to the chairman's position, so Milligan is likely to become chairman of the nation's biggest business organization in June 2009. According to U.S. Chamber staff, he would be the first Nebraskan ever elected to serve as the leader of the national organization.

U.S. Chamber President and CEO Tom Donohue said that Milligan "will bring 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." Milligan joined M I Industries in 1977 and became chairman and chief executive officer in 1980. Milligan has served as chairman since November 2003.

Milligan is a former board member of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He has been married for 40 years to Cynthia Hardin Milligan, dean of the College of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska. The State Chamber congratulates Bob on this tremendous honor and recognition of his leadership capabilities. ■

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.

ASHLAND

Lee Sapp Ford-Mercury
Lee Sapp, Jr.

AUSTIN, TX

Hewlett-Packard
Company
Fred Shannon

BEATRICE

Husqvarna Turf Care
Charlie Rogers

David L. Lottman
Excavating, Inc.

David L. Lottman
*Sponsor: Stan Wirth,
Pinnacle Bank*

Precise Fabrication, Inc.
LeRoy Janzen

*Sponsor: Stan Wirth,
Pinnacle Bank*

BELLEVIEW

McCallie Associates, Inc.
Jennifer S. Maassen

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA

Bridge Business
Bancorp
Anthony T. Clair

GENEVA

Geneva State Bank
Cam Wilkins

GRAND ISLAND

Legacy Communications-
Hometown Family Radio
Alan Usher

KEARNEY

Builders Warehouse
Matt Webster

LINCOLN

Community Bank of
Lincoln
Mary C. Gerdes

GT Exhaust Systems
Ed Osborn

Harris Data Storage
Neil Harris

Nebraska Institute of
Technology, Inc.
Dr. Karim Gharzai, Ph.D.

Paragon Sanitation, Inc.
Steve Hatten

Wolfe Electric Company,
Inc.

Dick Wolfe

*Sponsor: Bob Caldwell,
Hampton Enterprises, Inc.*

Workforce Inc.
Gary Nickel

LYONS

First National Bank
Northeast
Roy Miller

OMAHA

Brand Hydraulics Co.,
Inc.
Greg Brand

Embassy Suites Omaha-
Downtown/Old Market
Susan Madsen

Koski Professional
Group, P.C.
Randy Koski

Modis
Dru Rafferty

Nebraska Orthopaedic
Hospital
Thomas C. Macy

OPUS Medication Systems
Mark G. Keffeler

Syngenta Crop Protection,
Inc.
Randy Schomers

RAYMOND

James Arthur Vineyards
James Jeffers

SIOUX CITY, IA

Siouxland Chamber of
Commerce
Deborah Durham

WESTMINSTER, CO

Tri-State Generation &
Transmission
Mac McLennan