

## Councils To Meet

**T**wo of the State Chambers' Councils will meet on September 2 in Lincoln at the Cornhusker Hotel to review issues and proposed legislation and formulate any new policy. The Taxation Council will meet at 9:00 a.m., and the Economic Development Council will meet at 10:30 a.m. The results of the recent KPMG Consulting study, "A Comparative Analysis of Nebraska's Business Climate," will be the basis of the meetings. This important research evaluates the overall tax and incentive impact on seven selected case study businesses for Nebraska and nine competing states. Any new policy recommendations will be forwarded to the State Chamber Board for action at the December 5, 2004, meeting.

We appreciate all the time and effort spent by you, the members, in setting the business agenda for the upcoming legislative session. It would not work without you! For more information on the Councils, please contact the State Chamber office. ■

## Tax Americana Reprint

**E**nclosed with this issue of the *Executive* is a reprint of an article, Tax Americana, that was printed in the February, 2004, edition of the *American Legion* magazine. The author, Donald Lambro of the Washington Times, was pleased that we thought the article noteworthy for our members. In this, an election year, we believe the article to be most timely. ■

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## Fall Legislative Forums In Your Area

**T**he Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry needs to hear from you this fall as we visit 30 Nebraska communities for our annual Legislative Forums during the weeks of September 13-17, September 20-22, September 27-29 and October 6.

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.

A listing of complete locations is enclosed. We have added Forums in Tecumseh, Sarpy County, Wahoo and Ord this year. Please note times and locations. State Chamber elected

leaders and executive staff members will be present to discuss issues and answer your questions. The focus of this year's program will be the recent KPMG Consulting study, "A Comparative Analysis of Nebraska's Business Climate."

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. ■

## Australian Trade Agreement Endorsement

**A**t a recent meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers' NIC/State Associations Group (who collectively represent over 140,000 employers), State Chamber President Barry Kennedy was instrumental in the group's endorsement of the Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Jim Haney of the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce Association made the motion, seconded by Kennedy. Both posed with The Australian Minister for Trade, the Hon. Mark Vaile, M.P. ■



**Barry Kennedy (L), Mark Vaile, M.P. (C) and Jim Haney (R).**



## State Chamber Views...

Editorial by G. Richard Russell,  
Chairman of the Board  
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

# “Election Participation Critical For Business”

In looking at some past issues of the *Executive*, I came across an editorial by Barry Kennedy bemoaning the fact that less than 20% of Nebraska’s registered voters showed up at the polls for the May 14, 2002, Primary Election. We did a little better this year, as some 21% of eligible voters exercised their privilege. As business leaders, we have too much at stake to allow a minority of voters to determine our future. As was mentioned in the article, the old adage of needing 51% of the voters to be elected appears to be an anachronism. When only 20% of the registered voters show up, you can probably be elected with only 8-10% of the people’s support. That is very scary!

November is fast approaching, and it’s every American’s civic duty to educate themselves on the candidates and issues and to cast a vote on Election Day. With a U.S. economy poised to recover, it’s more important than ever that voters elect candidates who will provide businesses with the tools necessary to expand, create new jobs, improve worker pay and health benefits. The 2004 elections will determine our government’s approach to such fundamental issues as taxation, regulation, and litigation fairness. Your vote is important. As the last presidential election illustrated, the difference between victory and defeat in some races comes down to—quite literally—a handful of votes.

The State Chamber is working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to activate and energize business and employees for the elections. It’s called VoteForBusiness.com, a Web-based employee education program designed to engage you in the 2004 elections. VoteForBusiness.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. No more having to search multiple websites to get the information you need.

Research done after the 2002 election showed that employees, by a 2 to 1 margin, held a NEGATIVE opinion of their employer if they received their first election-related communication late in the cycle. These employees didn’t feel intruded upon, but were upset that they didn’t get information sooner and thus felt powerless to participate. On the other hand, by a 3 to 1 margin, employees had a POSITIVE opinion of their employer if they received 4-6 election-related communications throughout the cycle. That positive opinion jumped to 4 to 1 when employees received 7 or more communications. Further research showed that voter turnout increases as well with more “touches” from the employer. The hundreds of thousands of voters employed by our members are looking for guidance and leadership when it comes to voting. They are seeking out exactly the type of information VoteForBusiness.com provides. This program represents, by far, the boldest effort made by the business community to reach this group of important potential voters.

**VoteForBusiness.com provides all the resources needed to improve grassroots participation from your employees. From the website, your employees can register to vote, apply for absentee ballots, locate their polling place, and study the candidates running at the federal, state, and local levels.**

This DOES NOT mean telling employees how to vote. It DOES mean educating them concerning the impact of the issues on the employee and where the candidates stand on those issues.

During the 2000 elections, nearly 50% of the labor union members said they had heard from unions about the elections. Some groups that are most skeptical about political parties are within reach of employers, but employers are not communicating to the same extent as labor or political parties. Business influence on elections and voter turnout will increase in large proportions if employers engage in voter communication strategies.

I hope that each of you will communicate frequently with your employees as we progress through the year. Clearly, employees are looking for more information and see their employer as a valuable source of information.

**With your help, we will be able to motivate the business vote in a way that will make the difference in the upcoming elections. Send us your contact information, and we will contact you regarding a free kit that contains the tools you need to educate voters and get them to the polls on November 2, 2004. The kit includes: payroll stuffers, a bumper sticker, a poster for the workplace, camera-ready artwork, and fact sheets containing important election information. We can also provide you a websticker that links to the Chamber’s voter education website [www.voteforbusiness.com](http://www.voteforbusiness.com).**

Our nation was founded on the principle of representative government—the belief that each and every citizen deserves a voice in shaping our nation’s policies. For more than 200 years, Americans have fought and died to protect this very special right. Don’t allow your voice to be silenced during the 2004 election season. Vote! It’s Your Business. ■

## DED Serves Nebraska Business

As the state's lead economic development agency, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) is dedicated to helping businesses locate the information and resources they need to succeed, grow, and prosper. The major responsibility of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development is to use the tools and resources provided by the Nebraska Legislature, under the leadership of the governor to grow, diversify and develop the capability of Nebraska's economy to grow at a pace that enhances the lives of its residents.

More specifically, the mission of the Nebraska Department of Eco-

nomics Development is to provide quality leadership and services that enable Nebraska communities, businesses, and people to succeed in a global economy. The State Chamber works closely with DED on many issues, including the recently completed KPMG Consulting study, "A Comparative Analysis of Nebraska's Business Climate." The State Chamber's website [www.nechamber.com](http://www.nechamber.com) has a link to the DED website [www.neded.org](http://www.neded.org) to see the entire study, as well as the many other projects that DED uses to assist you and your community in developing and capitalizing on economic development opportunities. ■

## Second Federal Labor Standards Act Workshop Set For August 23

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 second FLSA REGS Workshop on August 23 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney. 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.

The State Chamber will also present employer workshops later this fall. On September 16 in Lincoln, "Managing ADA & Influencing Through Leadership" will be the subject of a half-day program. "How To Solve Tough Workplace Problems" and "Employer Progressive Discipline & Corrective Action" will be presented on October 7 in Lincoln. More details on these workshops are included in this issue of the *Executive*. ■

## Straight Talk

### Pat On The Back

◆ Congratulations to **Lincoln Plating**, Lincoln, named as one of the best medium-sized companies to work for in the U.S. by the Society of Human Resource Management. It was one of 25 medium sized companies given the honor.

◆ **Richard C. Hahn**, Chairman of Farmers National Company, Omaha, recently was given the J.D. Anderson Leadership Award by the Methodist Hospital Foundation. He was honored for his leadership qualities and dedication to community betterment.

◆ At the Institute for Organizational Management session in Colorado Springs this month, four Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives completed their fourth year and were given the IOM designation. This year's graduates are K.C. Belitz, President of the Columbus Area Chamber; Michelle Bring, Senior V.P. – Marketing of the Lincoln Chamber; Dan Mauk, President of the Norfolk Area Chamber; and Scott Terry, President and CEO of the Beatrice Chamber. Some 15 Nebraska Chamber executives participated in the Colorado Springs Institute, where Scottsbluff/Gering Chamber Executive Director Karen Anderson is a Regent. Other Nebraska Chamber executives are participating in Institute classes in other areas of the country, earning the IOM designation and participating in graduate classes aimed to further the professional development of chamber of commerce executives.



**Left: Colorado Institute attendees at the Nebraska Dinner. Right: IOM graduates Scott Terry, K.C. Belitz, Michelle Bring, and Dan Mauk with Regent Karen Anderson.**

# Governor's Summit On Workforce Development

The Governor's Summit on Workforce Development presents everyone involved with a tremendous opportunity to examine the challenges we face in workforce development. Held in Lincoln, this one-and-a-half day conference, November 9 and 10, 2004, brings Nebraska's current workforce development challenges to the forefront, promoting prosperity and growth in our state and local workforces. The Governor's Summit on Workforce Development commits itself to understanding the foundation for a strong Nebraska workforce and presenting this important issue to attendees. It is key that our workforce be built with the help of leaders in education, business, economic development, health care, and government. The State Chamber is one of the partners involved

with the Summit.

The State Chamber's website [www.nechamber.com](http://www.nechamber.com) has a link to the Governor's Summit on Workforce Development website where you can learn more about the summit, speakers, and register. This year the mission for the 2004 Governor's Summit on Workforce Development revolves around Navigating the New Workforce Frontier. We strive to call attention to issues surrounding the development of our future workforce. We aim to address skills training and education, untapped workforce resources, economic development, accommodating diversity in the workplace, health care, persons with disabilities, recruitment and retention, and transportation. ■

## 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.

### BEATRICE

Beatrice Animal Hospital  
Robert G. Baxa, DVM

### BELLEVUE

Dicobe Tapes, Inc.  
Mia K. Martin

### CENTRAL CITY

Mesner & Mesner  
Clifford F. Mesner  
Sponsor: Gary Warren,  
Hamilton Telecommunications

### COLUMBUS

Fagen, Inc.  
Walter Kittrel  
Sponsor: Don Heimes,  
Corporate Finance Associates

### GOTHENBURG

Bacon & Vinton  
Michael L. Bacon  
Sponsor: Gary Warren,  
Hamilton Telecommunications

### GRAND ISLAND

Riverside Lodge Retirement  
Community  
Jan Thayer

### GUIDE ROCK

The Guide Rock State Bank  
Clifford E. Vogler

### KIMBALL

Curley's Machine Works, Inc.  
Darlene "Shortie" Kiefer  
Sponsor: Don Heimes,  
Corporate Finance Associates

### LEXINGTON

Fairbanks International, Inc.  
David W. Fairbanks  
Sponsor: Richard McGinnis,  
Home Federal Savings & Loan  
Association of Nebraska

Nebraska By-Products, Inc.  
Leon A. Johnson

### LINCOLN

BKD, LLP  
Norman Hedgecock

### HRConnex, Inc.

Mark Koller  
Nelnet Inc.  
Terry J. Heimes  
Sponsor: Don Heimes,  
Corporate Finance Associates

Signs Now Lincoln LLC  
John L. Hoppe, Jr.

Square D Company  
Jamie McDonald

Zimmer Insurance Group  
Greg Zimmer

### NORFOLK

Elkhorn Valley Economic  
Development Council  
R.J. Baker

Henn House Dairy, Inc.  
Mike Henn

Sponsor: Mike Flood, Flood  
Communications, LLC, US92  
Radio

### OMAHA

Advance Services, Inc.  
Jeanette Quattrocchi

D & D Foods, Inc.  
Doug Wallace

Diversified Financial Services  
Roger A. Fleury

N.P. Dodge Company  
N.P. Dodge, Jr.  
Sponsor: G. Richard Russell,  
Millard Lumber Inc.

The Lund Company  
John Lund  
Sponsor: G. Richard Russell,  
Millard Lumber Inc.

Midwest Industrial Tools, Inc.  
Allan W. Chartier  
Sponsor: Dwayne B. Probyn,  
Metropolitan Community  
College

Redstone Communications  
Phil Webb

Skylark Meats, Inc.  
Jim Leonard

Telec Consulting Resources,  
Inc.  
Dan Caldwell

United Healthcare of the  
Midlands, Inc.  
Tom Evans  
Sponsor: John Carlson,  
SilverStone Group

SCOTTSBLUFF  
Scottsbluff Ford LLC  
Q Aragon

SONOMA, CA  
Kid Scoop  
Vicky Whiting

YORK  
Faller Landscape, Inc.  
Todd Faller

York County Development  
Corporation  
Norene Fitzgerald