



THE STATE CHAMBER'S LEADERSHIP NEBRASKA



Leadership Nebraska Update

The State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program is now accepting applications for the 2008 class. The deadline is October 15, 2007.

As you know, the program is patterned after many local and some 30 state leadership programs. It is our desire to give participants a wide range of experiences and insights that focus on the issues and challenges facing Nebraska, much the same way that many local communities are training and nurturing community leaders.

Participants of Leadership Nebraska will be individuals living and/or working in the state of Nebraska with proven leadership experience and an interest in continuing to advance the welfare of the people of Nebraska.

Nebraskans with an interest in leadership and the future of our state may apply to be part of the next class of the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program. Information and applications are available at: www.statechamberleadershipnebraska.com.

This year's class met in Omaha June 27-29 for a session on Economic Development that was conducted by the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. Members were updated by leading site consultant Ron Pollina, who discussed many aspects of recruiting and retaining employers in Nebraska and how we compare to other states. The class was given a short but intensive demonstration of how Omaha and Nebraska works to attract prospects, tours of the Kiewit Institute and CLAAS Omaha. Tourism's role in the state's economic development efforts was featured on Friday with tours of the Qwest Convention Center and Arena, the Qwest Hilton Omaha, and the Holland Performing Arts Center.

The rest of the sessions include the Education session in Kearney on July 31-Aug. 2; and the Health/Healthcare/Human Services session in Norfolk on September 12-14. A commencement ceremony will be held in Lincoln on November 2.

We encourage State Chamber members to consider nominating or encouraging employees or community members to apply to become part of the 2008 class. For any aspect of the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program, please contact Executive Director Don Mihovk at the State Chamber office, or log on to www.statechamberleadershipnebraska.com.

Proposed Schedule for 2007 Legislative Forums

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry needs to hear from you this fall as we visit at least 30 Nebraska communities for our annual Legislative Forums during the weeks of October 8-12; October 15-18; October 22-24; and November 5-7.

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

The following is a listing of proposed locations and dates. 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 legislative session, including developments involving state taxes, labor law, workers' compensation, highway funding, and liability protection for cities and counties.

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 State Chamber Legislative Forums are a good 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, Oct. 8

Lunch Gothenburg
Aurora

Tuesday, Oct. 9

Breakfast Alliance

Lunch Scottsbluff
Blair

Wednesday, Oct. 10

Breakfast North Platte
Lunch Nebraska City

Friday, Oct. 12

Lunch York

Monday, Oct. 15

Lunch O'Neill
Dinner Norfolk

Tuesday, Oct. 16

Breakfast West Point
Omaha
Lunch South Sioux City
Omaha

Wednesday, Oct. 17

Lunch Bellevue

Thursday, Oct. 18

Breakfast Lincoln
Lunch Fremont

Monday, Oct. 22

Breakfast McCook
Lunch Holdrege
Broken Bow
Dinner Hastings

Tuesday, Oct. 23

Breakfast Beatrice
Kearney
Lunch Ord

Wednesday, Oct. 24

Lunch Columbus

Monday, Nov. 5

Lunch Tecumseh

Tuesday, Nov. 6

Breakfast Papillion
Ogallala
Lunch Grand Island
Sidney

Wednesday, Nov. 7

Lunch Wahoo

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.

ELKHORN

Schering-Plough Animal Health
Ernest J. Kontor

GRAND ISLAND

Filter Specialists, Inc. of NE
Roger Muhle

GRAND LEDGE, MI

Schering-Plough External Affairs, Inc.
Matthew C. Hedberg

LINCOLN

ALLTEL Wireless
Bill Ashburn

Embassy Suites - Lincoln
Steve Hilton

Stephens & Smith Construction Co.,
Inc.

Robert Stephens
Sponsors: Bill Harding, Harding & Shultz P.C., L.L.O. and Rick Russell, Millard Lumber Inc.

MINDEN

KAAPA Ethanol L.L.C.
Chuck Woodside

NORFOLK

Major Refrigeration Co., Inc.
Wilma Johnson

NORTH PLATTE

TALX Corporation
Kimberly Stewart

OMAHA

It's A Wonderful World Child Care & Learning Center
Jerry Erdman

The Maids International, Inc.

Mike Urdahl

Sponsor: Mick Jensen, Great Plains Communications, Inc.

SHELBY

Selden Trucking, Inc.
Monte Selden

Ceremonial Signing Held for Estate Tax Repeal

On June 26, members of a statewide coalition, which included the State Chamber, gathered to recognize the Governor's and Legislature's efforts to repeal the Nebraska estate tax. Gov. Heineman ceremoniously signed LB367, this year's comprehensive tax cut plan which abolished the estate tax. Following the ceremony, the State Chamber's Vice President-General Counsel Ron Sedlacek and the Governor discussed the economic advantages created by the tax cut package and the estate tax repeal, including the state's expected rise in national competitiveness rankings. The Governor noted that Nebraska is one of only three states in 2007 to use its budget surplus to cut taxes. LB367 will provide more than \$420 million in tax relief over the next two years, including about \$25 million through abolishment of the estate tax. ■



Businesses Rank Internet As Most Important Marketing Tool

A majority of business owners say they plan to spend as much or more this year on online advertising and other Web tools, according to INC. Magazine. Entrepreneurs now say the Internet is the most important marketing tool for their companies. The Capital Access Network Small Business Barometer, a quarterly poll of 250 business owners nationwide who accept credit cards from customers as a method of payment, found that small business owners are making efforts to increase their Internet presence. Forty-four percent say they plan on spending more on Internet tools this year compared to 2006, while 27 percent plan to spend the same amount as last year.

Also, many small businesses have begun implementing online advertising strategies. Of the survey respondents, 59 percent use online ads. ■

U.S. Chamber Institute Graduates



Don Mihovk, State Chamber; Sandie Fischer, Columbus Chamber; and Barry Kennedy, State Chamber. Marion, Sandie and Don graduated and received their IOM designation. Congratulations!

Nebraska attendees at the July 8-12 U.S. Chamber Institute for Organizational Management held at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles were (left to right): Megan McGown, Cheyenne County Chamber; Marion Kroeker, Ogallala Chamber;

Update Minimum Wage Law Notices At Your Workplace

It's time to change a few of the notices at your workplace — particularly the minimum wage notices. On July 24, the first phase of the new federal minimum wage increase will go into effect, raising the national and state minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$5.85. Employers are required to post current employee rights notices in common areas at all workplace locations, including state and federal minimum wage levels. Failure to do so can result in thousands of dollars in fines. Also, it is important that employers are in compliance with the laws to avoid costly wage-hour lawsuits.

The State Chamber has made arrangements so its members can obtain a new labor law poster featuring the minimum wage change and several other federally required postings. These posters can be obtained through the American Chamber of Commerce Resources for only \$5 per poster (2 or more, \$3.50 each). To order, simply call 866-439-2227. Provide code: NEPN. ■



State Chamber Views...

Guest Editorial by Tom L. Whalen
Chairman,
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

"For So Many Reasons, There Is No Place Like Nebraska"

As the Legislature's 2007 session neared its conclusion, I couldn't help but reflect on what an incredible place Nebraska is to live, work and raise a family.

A few points to consider about our state:

- Our population ranks 38th of the 50 states.
- Per capita income ranks 20th.
- Our state's technology and science index ranks 8th.
- Our educational attainment for the population 25 and older ranks 8th.
- More than 1,500 companies in Nebraska export goods and services to over 200 countries, adding \$3.5B to the state's economy.
- More than 250 Nebraska companies are foreign-owned and employ more than 20,000 workers.
- Our taxes? Well, we're working on those!

Just a couple years ago, our Legislature passed and our governor signed the Nebraska Advantage Act, which has provided incentives to 100 companies to invest more than \$3.6 billion and create more than 9,500 Nebraska jobs. Recently, a notable Chicago-based site selection consultant stated that Nebraska is ranked 10th nationally among pro-business states.

The 2007 Legislature worked with the governor to pass the largest tax relief package in state history, enacting more than \$420 million in tax cuts – including full repeal of the estate tax. Your State Chamber, once again, played an important role in the passage of this legislation. Staff provided information and guidance to Senators and helped coordinate testimony offered by Chamber members on various bills in this legislative session.

Your State Chamber staff also monitored more than 275 key bills

that had a potential impact on the Nebraska business community. The progress of many of these bills was chronicled in the Chamber's new *Daily News Update* during the legislative session. This daily e-mail communication proved to be extremely valuable to our members, helping them stay abreast of developments.

While 2007 presented some challenges, the results were mostly positive. Thanks to all of you who were involved. And as we prepare for the 2008 legislative session, we look forward to your continued support and involvement to make Nebraska an even better place to do business.

We have *great* values in our state. We have a responsible workforce; a solid education system; and an insatiable curiosity that motivates us to explore not only what could be, but should be in the way of programs, policies and practices that will strengthen our state.

Truly, there is no place like Nebraska! ■

Legislative Report To Go Electronic in 2008

Beginning in January, the State Chamber's weekly *Legislative Report* will be delivered by e-mail instead of regular mail. This will ensure a timely delivery of this service, which summarizes the developments affecting the business community. We will also e-mail the bill status sheet, the bill digest and committee hearing notices. Don't miss a single delivery of the *Report*. Complete the form included with this edition of THE EXECUTIVE – or e-mail your organization's name and the e-mail addresses of recipients who wish to receive the *Report* to kkoch@nechamber.com.

Your State Chamber Executive Council (Continued from page 1)

Communications, Inc., Nebraska's largest family-owned telecommunications provider. After graduating from UNL in 1966, Mick joined the telephone company as part of the construction crew in Grant, Nebraska. After working at numerous jobs in the field for several years, Mick and his family moved to Blair, Nebraska where the company is headquartered.

Jensen is actively involved in numerous local and civic organizations as well as national professional organizations, and has served in leadership positions within these groups. He is also a director of the Nebraska Information Network. Jensen and his wife, Gail, have two children and two grandchildren. ■

Few States Promote Entrepreneurship Education in Schools

INC. Magazine reports that while entrepreneurship education may now be common at the university level, the topic is still not included in K-12 curriculums in the majority of states, according to a recent report by the National Council on Economic Education. Just over a third of states include entrepreneurship in their K-12 education standards. Only two, New York and California, require that high school students receive some instruction in the subject before they graduate. Some schools, however, now offer entrepreneurship courses even without state requirements. The survey found 22 states now require testing of economics, down from 25 in 2004 and 27 in 2002. "I think that's an unintended consequence of No Child Left Behind's emphasis on reading and math," one of the study's authors said. ■

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER 
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Your State Chamber Executive Council

The State Chamber's Executive Council is comprised of the chairman, chairman-elect, past chairman, treasurer, president and six district vice chairmen. The vice chairmen each represent one of the six geographic districts on the Executive Council. These officers are elected for a one-year term by the full Board. This month, we feature the vice chairmen from Districts III, V and VI.



Dr. Raymond C. Ward



Joanne F. Shephard



S. Michael Jensen

Dr. Raymond C. Ward is in his first year as District V vice chairman. He is the founder, president and co-owner of Ward Laboratories, Inc. of Kearney, one of the largest agricultural laboratory testing facilities in the Great Plains.

Dr. Ward earned his doctorate degree in soil fertility from South Dakota State University after his undergraduate work at the University of Nebraska. A certified soil scientist, Dr. Ward has also managed laboratories in Oklahoma, Kansas and South Dakota. He is well respected in his profession as is evidenced by his

authorship of numerous published papers and articles, his speaking engagements at state and national meetings, and the expertise he has provided nationally and internationally.

Earlier this year, Dr. Ward was named a recipient of the UNL Alumni Achievement Award by the Nebraska Alumni Association. Dr. Ward and his wife, Jolene, have four children and seven grandchildren.

Serving as District VI vice chairman is **Joanne F. Shephard**, a third generation banker whose family has been involved in The First National Bank of Valentine since 1911.

Shephard's banking career began early, when she worked at The First National Bank of Valentine during her school breaks. After graduating from UNL, she continued her banking career in Omaha. Over the last thirty years, she has served as a bank officer in Nebraska, Iowa and California, as well as working for the FDIC as a bank examiner in Nebraska and

Iowa. In 1994, she returned to Valentine to run the family-owned bank following the tragic death of her brother in a plane accident. Shephard currently serves as president/chief executive officer/chairman of the board of The First National Bank of Valentine. She is active in bank trade organizations, both at the state and national level.

She is also active in several other state organizations, including the Chancellor's Board of Counselors at the University of Nebraska Medical Center; the State Historical Society Foundation; the Museum of Nebraska Art; the Nebraska Arts Council; the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation; and the Nature Conservancy. She and her husband, Don, are parents of sons, Joshua, 19, and Joseph, 16.

The current District III vice chairman is **S. Michael Jensen of Blair**. Jensen is CEO of Great Plains

(Continued on page 2)

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