

The State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska Update

Early September will see the formal announcement of the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program and the beginning of the application period for the inaugural class. The Leadership Nebraska Council and its subcommittees have been busy with meetings and planning sessions to shape the first year's sessions, set to begin in mid-February of 2007. Applications will continue through mid-October, and the first class will be notified in December.

The program is aimed at persons who have demonstrated community and professional leadership experiences. We plan to offer six 1½-day to 2-day sessions per year that would give class members an opportunity to develop and hone leadership skills and gain a broader understanding of issues facing Nebraska. Sessions will begin with an Orientation Retreat at Mahoney State Park, followed by the

session on Public Service in Lincoln in late March, the Agriculture session in Scottsbluff in early May, the Economic Development session in Omaha in late June, the Education session in Kearney in late July and early August, and the Health/Healthcare/Human Services session in Norfolk in September. A graduation ceremony will be held in Lincoln, likely in October.

The focus will be on leadership development by advancing participants' leadership qualities and broadening their understanding of and involvement in issues and opportunities facing our state. Class members learn about the critical issues in these areas through discussions with top officials of the state, professionals in the areas, field trips and experiential activities. The program cultivates a network of citizens with diverse backgrounds and experiences who represent the many geographic areas of Nebraska.

The subcommittees are still actively planning each session and would welcome your help if you so desire. Active participation in the program has been excellent so far, with every effort to make these sessions as interactive and meaningful as possible.

The program is still in need of financial support and would welcome sponsors and donors to help underwrite costs, help match our Kiewit Foundation grant, and provide for scholarships for qualified candidates. A tax-deductible non-profit 501(c)(3) organization has been organized for Leadership Nebraska, and we have been successful in obtaining some grant funds.

For more information on any aspect of the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program, please contact Council Chairman Bob Harris or Vice President-Public Affairs Don Mihovk at the State Chamber office. ■

The State Chamber Board

The Executive Council is made up of the Chairman, Chairman-elect, Past Chairman, Treasurer, Six District Vice Chairmen and the President. The Vice Chairmen represent each of the six geographic districts on the Executive Council. Such officers are elected for a one-year term by the full Board. This month, we feature District II and VI Vice Chairmen.

Philip S. Mullin is in his second year as District II Vice Chairman. He is owner and President of Garner



Philip S. Mullin

Industries, of Lincoln, a leading manufacturer of precision tooling, CNC machining and custom molds. One of the main focuses of Garner Industries is plastic injection mold building. The firm also manufactures a product line of rain



G. Lee Glenn

gauges and related home and garden products. A graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University, Mullin has a B.A. in Business. Active in his community, Mullin is a member of the Lincoln Food Bank Board, the I-80 Corridor Commission, and the Nebraska Diplomats. He is active in the Lincoln Chamber of

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State Chamber Views...

Editorial by Barry L. Kennedy
President,
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

"Big Shoes To Fill"

Term limits is now a reality. Irrespective of your stand on the policy, Nebraskans must now live by the law that was enacted by the voters.

An even greater responsibility falls on you, both as a voter and a business leader, to educate yourself on the positions that each candidate has taken on your most important issues. Only a well-informed electorate will ensure that the new senators elected will provide representation equal to, or better than, the old ones.

As a business leader, you understand the value of participating in governmental affairs. You understand that the election process is not a spectator sport, even though it's referred to as "a race." You know that you cannot afford to simply sit back, watch and hope that the best candidate for you and your business will be elected. The election process is a team sport. Every candidate has an election team. When you are a member of the team, you are able to assist in developing the strategy for winning. If you remain a spectator, someone else will be calling the plays, and their participation may not coincide with you or your business' best interests. **As a business leader in your community, you have the opportunity to be a "first-stringer" on your candidate's team.**

So, once again, let's review the numbers. There are 49 state senators in the Nebraska Legislature. Twenty senators are term-limited this year and cannot run for re-election. One senator is retiring from office and has taken herself off the ballot. Another senator has opted to run for a state-wide office and will likely be elected. In sum, at least 22 new senators will

be sworn into office in January. The 22 outgoing legislators achieved an average of 76% support on business issues, as measured by the State Chamber Voting Record. Seventeen of the 22 senators boasted an average of 85% support on business issues, and if they were able to run for re-election, it is obvious that they would have counted on the State Chamber to be an active supporter. In short, many of the business community's strongest supporters will be discarded by the calendar.

The amount of forced turnover is even more intriguing, considering that 10 of the 22 retiring senators hold leadership positions within the Unicameral. The Speaker of the Legislature and nine committee chairs are among those departing. In the 2008 election – only two years from now – another 17 senators will be term-limited. Candidates who are elected this year will need to accelerate the learning curve. In the past, few legislators would attempt to obtain a committee chairmanship until their second term. It is not unreasonable to *expect that several of the 2006 class of newly-elected senators will move into leadership roles, mid-way through their first term.*

For these reasons, the business community must make every effort to elect the best possible candidates in 2006.

Constituent input becomes even more important now than in the past. High quality representatives will always both *listen and respond* to constituents.

The State Chamber-PAC has charted its course in virtually all legislative races for 2006. More help will be required as we approach the November elections. We need your enthusiastic

support. We hope that you will promptly respond to an appeal that you will be receiving in the near future. We have personally interviewed the candidates for office. We are making every effort to assure that those candidates who deserve the business community's support will have the resources to timely deliver their messages to the electorate.

You too, need to acquaint yourself with the legislative candidates in your area. These candidates need to know and understand your position on key business issues. Invite them to tour your business, meet your employees and gain a better understanding of the economic, social and leadership impact your company has in your community, and possibly, across Nebraska.

Consider seriously the impact your involvement may have on your employees. Studies show that employees trust their employer as a credible source for political information, especially on issues that affect the business' ability to grow and provide jobs within the community.

Employers communicate to employees every day. It costs very little to ensure that the vast Nebraska workforce is well informed about key issues and candidates. Don't miss the opportunity to educate your employees and encourage them to vote.

If there is a contested race in your area, ask questions that will give you a clear understanding of which candidate will serve the best interests of Nebraska's economy and opportunities for business growth. Do not be reluctant about sharing your evaluation with other business leaders, the State Chamber, and your employees.

For Nebraska to remain "Open for Business," maintaining a pro-business Legislature is essential.



The State Chamber Board

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Commerce and Downtown Rotary Club. In addition, Phil serves on the National Association of Manufacturers Board.

Mullin has served on the Board for the Governor's Task Force for School-To-Work, the Lincoln Symphony, and the Cornhusker Council of Boy Scouts of America.

G. Lee Glenn is in his first year as the Vice Chairman for District VI. He is Vice President and CFO of Kelley Bean Co. of Scottsbluff. After growing up in Western Nebraska, Lee graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Business in 1972.

He returned to Scottsbluff and began a career in the dry bean business starting with Chester B. Brown Co., one of the pioneers in the industry. This company and Kelley Bean Co. merged in 1982. He also serves as a Director of Platte Valley Financial Services, a holding company for banks in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska.

Lee also is involved with several local foundations and service organizations. His family consists of wife Deb, a local interior designer; daughters Jillian, a graphic designer in Boulder, Colorado and Hillary, a junior at CSU in Fort Collins, Colorado. ■

Health Insurance in Nebraska: Good News, Bad News

The bad news first - health insurance premiums are still increasing. The average health insurance premium for the area increased by 12.1% this past year. This is slightly up from 11.7% last year. This is according to the *Compensation Data 2006 - Iowa/Nebraska* survey results released in June. (Refer to the "Nebraska and Iowa Premiums" chart to view increases over the past five years.)

The good news for employers is PPO plans had the lowest increase of any commonly used plan at 11.9%, and the majority (69.7%) of regional employers offer a PPO plan. The bad news for employees is with 72.7% of employers paying between 70 and 99 percent of their employees' healthcare premiums, companies have engaged in

cost-saving activities such as increased cost-sharing, increasing deductibles and co-insurance amounts and decreasing their benefits offered. In fact, 42.3% of regional companies increased the employee's portion of the health premium, 30.0% increased deductible levels, and 10.6% reduced benefits offered in an effort to save on healthcare costs.

"Employers who have refrained from cost-sharing or decreasing benefits over the past couple of years are the exception, not the rule," said Amy Kaminski, manager of marketing programs for Compdata Surveys. "But companies understand the financial burden this places on its employees and are turning to alternative methods such as encouraging healthy lifestyles in order to control costs."

Nebraska and Iowa Premiums	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Average premium increase	15.2%	15.9%	13.9%	11.7%	12.1%
Increased employee portion of health insurance premium	34.5%	46.3%	46.0%	47.2%	42.3%

About the Survey

Compensation Data 2006 - Iowa/Nebraska contains data on 500 job titles ranging from entry-level to top executives. Information was collected on more than 125,000 employees across the state. The results provide a comprehensive summary of pay data, benefits information and pay practices with an effective date of March 1, 2006. Compdata Surveys has been

partnering with the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry for 11 years to provide accurate, reliable data at affordable prices. For further information about the compensation and benefits surveys, contact Compdata Surveys at (800) 300-9570 or visit www.compdatasurveys.com to obtain a copy of the just-released 2006 survey results. ■

Fall Legislative Forums In Your Area

Voters this fall will elect 24 State Senators, with 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 several dates in October. Enclosed is a flyer detailing 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 and candidates 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.

Times and locations will be finalized by your local chambers of commerce who host the Forums in their community and handle reservations. State Chamber elected leaders and executive staff members will be

present to discuss issues regarding taxation 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. With such a large change in the Unicameral's membership, 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. ■

Institute Update

The Institute for Organizational Management moved to Los Angeles this summer, and eight Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives attended. Karen Anderson, Executive Director of the Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce continues as a Regent for the Institute for Organizational Management. Attendees this year were: Steph Black, Scottsbluff, 2nd Year; Megan McGown, Sidney, 2nd Year; Brenda Janzen, York, 2nd Year; Sandie Fischer, Columbus, 3rd Year; Marion Kroeker, Ogallala, 3rd Year; Don Mihovk, State Chamber, 3rd Year; Barry Kennedy, State Chamber, Graduate Classes; and Karen Anderson, Scottsbluff, Graduate Classes.

Earlier this year, three Nebraska Chamber Execs graduated with the IOM degrees from the Tucson Institute for Organizational Management. Congratulations to Bruce Bohrer of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Cindy Johnson of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, and Megan Lucas of the Bellevue Area Chamber of Commerce as the latest IOM members. ■



Left to Right: Mihovk, Anderson, Kennedy, Janzen, Black, Fischer, McGown, and Kroeker.

New Board Appointments

Two resignations opened positions on the State Chamber Board earlier this year. Chairman Rich Bailey presented two appointments at the May 19 State Chamber Board of Directors meeting. In District III, Jeffrey M. Scherer, Chief Financial Officer at Smeal Fire Apparatus Co. in Snyder, will replace Bill Ferhman for an unexpired one-year term. In District I, Chris Kircher, Vice President-Communications at ConAgra Foods, will replace Mike Walter for a three-year unexpired term. ■

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.

ALBION

Albion Chamber of Commerce
Abigail Johnson

ARLINGTON, VA

American Chemistry Council
Genise Smith-Watkins

BROOMFIELD, CO

Infocrossing, Inc.
Richard Keck

DESHLER

Deshler Chamber of Commerce
Eric Leichty

FALLS CITY

Watkins Aircraft Support Products
Bradley Albu

HASTINGS

Gottsch Enterprises
Bob Gottsch

HENDERSON

Mainstay Communications
Matt Friesen
Sponsor: S. Michael Jensen, Great Plains Communications, Inc.

LINCOLN

Arrow Striping, Inc.
Rena Whitney

Parker Hannifin Corporation

Robert McQuistan

Sponsor: Philip Mullin, Garner Industries

Tracy’s Body Shop
Steve Jaros

Zimmer Insurance Group
Greg Zimmer

OMAHA

Gatchell Electric, Inc.
Dave Reeve

infoUSA

Vinod Gupta
Sponsor: Duane Acklie, Crete Carrier Corporation

KPTM FOX 42
John Carpenter

McMannama & Associates, Inc.
Jack McMannama

Omaha Wilbert Vaults, Inc.
Kelli Nobiling

Safarik Enterprises
Ron Safarik

Sponsor: Mitch Arnold, MoveBackToNebraska.com

Total Synergies
Laine Penney

TFF, Inc.
Mary Jo Thielen

PLATTSMOUTH

Plattsmouth State Bank
Lori Schneider

RALSTON

Omega Chemical Co., Inc.
Allen Doub

STRATTON

Timber Creek Homes, Inc.
Charles Pelkey