

# THE EXECUTIVE

## THE STATE CHAMBER



Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

October/November 2007

## Meet Your State Chamber Executive Council

In the July/Aug. edition of THE EXECUTIVE, we profiled three of your State Chamber's six vice chairmen. In this issue, we look at the other vice chairmen serving on the State Chamber Executive Council, which also consists of the chairman, chairman-elect, past chairman, treasurer, and president.



Galen F. Ullstrom



Marc E. LeBaron



Brian C. Hamilton

**Galen F. Ullstrom** of Omaha is the District I vice chairman. He is the senior vice president, state government relations, at Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company. Ullstrom joined Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company in 1985 as an associate general counsel. He assumed his present position in 1996. Before joining Mutual of Omaha, Ullstrom worked in private practice and served as vice president and general counsel for Lincoln Liberty Life Insurance Company. He also served as general counsel of the Nebraska Department of Insurance.

Ullstrom currently serves as a board member for the Medical Infor-

mation Bureau (MIB), in addition to belonging to various committees of two national insurance trade associations, America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) and the American Council of Life Insurers (ACLI). He is also a member of the Nebraska Insurance Federation and is vice chairman of the Nebraska Tax Re-

search Council. Ullstrom received his B.A. degree in 1968 from the University of Nebraska and his J.D. degree from the NU College of Law in 1972. He and his wife, Joy, have two adult children, Anne in Los Angeles and Jayne in Lincoln.

Serving as District II vice chairman is **Marc E. LeBaron** of Lincoln. A graduate of Lincoln High School and the University of Nebraska, LeBaron is the chairman and CEO of Lincoln Industries, a position he has held since 2001.

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## Fall Legislative Forums Begin

The State Chamber's annual fall Legislative Forums are now underway. Executive staff are visiting 32 communities and conducting 33 Legislative Forums across the state from Oct. 4 through Nov. 7. These forums are held each fall to gather input from the business community on legislative concerns and other important issues.

This is your opportunity to tell us what is on your mind regarding legislative matters. It is also a great time to visit with your state senator. The program will focus on key legislation passed earlier this year, as well as look at the upcoming 2008 session. Late October and early November forum locations include: McCook, Holdrege, Broken Bow, Hastings, Beatrice, Kearney, Blair, Ord, Columbus, Seward, Ogallala, Sarpy County, Sidney, Grand Island and Wahoo.

The State Chamber's Legislative Forums are open to all members of the State Chamber and/or members of local chambers of commerce. State Chamber executive staff members will present the forums, and all Nebraska state senators have been invited. For more information, please contact the State Chamber office.

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## **State Chamber Views...**

*Editorial by Barry L. Kennedy*

*President,*

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# **"The Value of Belonging To The State Chamber"**

**B**usiness in Nebraska is looking good. Earlier this year, a well-known nationwide study – the Pollina Corporate Survey – ranked Nebraska in its top ten of pro-business states. This year is the first time that Nebraska has ever appeared in the Pollina survey's top ten.

The good news continued when Governor Heineman announced that 116 companies have applied for incentives under the state's business incentive plan – known as the Nebraska Advantage. More than 10,000 new jobs and more than \$4 billion in investments could come to our state due to the Nebraska Advantage Act, which was strongly supported by the State Chamber after its introduction in the Legislature in 2005.

Nebraska's business climate and competitiveness ranking are improving rapidly, and the State Chamber wants to see these trends continue.

With 95 years of experience under our belt, the State Chamber is Nebraska's largest statewide business association – representing individuals, large and small companies, other associations and local chambers of commerce. We are not a charitable organization – we are a business trade association that provides a valuable service for a fee. Our members hire us to look out for their interests and the state's business interests.

One of our highest priorities is monitoring and lobbying Nebraska's Unicameral on issues that affect business growth and profitability. We know that most employers simply do not have time to stay abreast of all the proposed rules, regulations, laws, procedures and other issues that affect their bottom line. That is why we work hard to promote, encourage and protect all aspects and elements

of Nebraska's free-enterprise system.

Whether it is labor law, tax policy, economic development, health insurance mandates or federal trade policy, your State Chamber strives to make your views known to the elected officials who make decisions impacting your business and your community.

Another key to our success is our relationship with local business leaders. Nebraska is extremely fortunate to have a network of strong local chambers of commerce. Each one has a dynamic impact on the community and area it serves.

We know the professional staff of Nebraska's local chambers work extremely hard to carry out the directions set by their leadership – and the continued growth of our state economy depends heavily on their efforts. Without our local chamber leaders, it would be difficult to accurately gauge the pulse of our state business community. That is why we place a heavy emphasis on our relationship with local chamber leaders.

It is difficult to put an exact dollar amount on the value of a State Chamber membership. But our long list of recent legislative accomplishments indicates that State Chamber members definitely get their money's worth.

For example, the 2007 legislative session saw the passage of a \$420 million tax relief package – the largest tax cut in state history. The state estate tax was repealed. The sales tax on commercial construct labor was abolished. Another \$10 million was dedicated to the Nebraska job training program. Important pro-business bills addressing workers' compensation hospital fees and sick leave benefits were approved and signed into law. And threats to the state's right-to-

work guarantee were blocked.

The State Chamber played an active role in all of these initiatives. We are proud of these accomplishments.

But like most businesses, the State Chamber's work never ends. Next year brings a new legislative session; once again, we will be vigilant in serving your interests.

If you are not yet a member of the State Chamber, call (402) 474-4422 or e-mail [jberringer@nechamber.com](mailto:jberringer@nechamber.com) and ask for information on joining our proud membership. ■

## **State Chamber's Annual Meeting Brings New Opportunities For Sponsors**

**T**he Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry is offering sponsorship opportunities that will get your business recognized before a large target audience at the Chamber's Annual Meeting on Jan. 24, 2008. Businesses or organizations interested in sponsoring this important meeting of business and community leaders should contact the State Chamber as soon as possible.

The Annual Meeting, to be held at The Cornhusker Marriott in Lincoln, is the State Chamber's largest event of the year. The event begins with a luncheon and business meeting of the membership, followed by afternoon sessions that include briefings on key workforce and economic issues, as well as legislative panels featuring state lawmakers. In the evening, three Nebraska business leaders will be inducted into the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame.

There are several levels of sponsorship for the 2008 Annual Meeting. For details on sponsoring the 2008 Annual Meeting, or to reserve your sponsorship, contact James Berringer at 402-474-4422 or e-mail [jberringer@nechamber.com](mailto:jberringer@nechamber.com).

# Leadership Nebraska Applications Due October 31

The State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program works to develop and motivate a cross-section of leaders who will use their talents to inspire others and to foster a new spirit of energy, enthusiasm and vitality throughout the state. Each year, a class of up to 30 leaders is selected to participate in the program. Those selected must have demonstrated skills and experience in civic activities, public affairs and in their professional careers. Although the selected participants will be from different regions, have varied backgrounds and possess diverse talents, they all must have one common characteristic – an abiding interest in Nebraska and its future. *Applications for the 2008 class are due October 31.* Sessions begin in late February. For more information on Leadership Nebraska, e-mail [dmihovk@nechamber.com](mailto:dmihovk@nechamber.com) or call 402-474-4422. ■

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LeBaron has been with Lincoln Industries for more than 30 years. He was named the Nebraska/Iowa "Entrepreneur of the Year" in 2000 by Ernst & Young. Outside of the workplace, he serves on the boards of several entities, including U.S. Bank; Security Financial Life Insurance Company; Assurity Security Group, Inc; BryanLGH Hospital; and Nebraska Wesleyan University. LeBaron and his wife, Kathy, have two daughters, Katie and Cassandra.

**Brian C. Hamilton** of Bellevue is the District IV vice chairman. He is co-owner of Midway Chevrolet-Cadillac-Buick and Midway Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep in Kearney, as well as Beardmore Chevrolet, Inc. in Bellevue. He is a graduate of Bellevue High School and UNL.

Hamilton worked in the trucking industry for 10 years in various sales and management positions, including serving as a terminal manager for Yellow Freight. He has been involved in the automotive sales industry for the past 25 years. Hamilton has served in leadership positions of several organizations, including chairman of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, president of the Grand Island Rotary Club, and president of the Heartland Events Center. He is the state director for the National Automobile Association and serves on the board of directors for the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Hamilton and his wife, Carey, have two daughters, Rebecca and Hilary, and three grandchildren. ■

## Business Leaders Lauded During Nebraska Diplomats' 40th Annual Banquet

On Sept. 28, Nebraska Diplomats hosted its 40th Annual "Passport to Nebraska" banquet. The Diplomats is a non-profit corporation comprised of individual business leaders working to promote economic development throughout the state. Several individuals and organizations were honored at the banquet, as awards were presented by Governor Dave Heineman. The Ambassador Plenipotentiary Award – the highest Diplomat honor – went to Blair State Senator Mick Mines, who has been a member of the Legislature's Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee since 2003 and chaired the Committee from 2005-2006.

The Diplomat of the Year went to Jack A. Schreiner, president of Bruckman Rubber Co. in Hastings. As a Nebraska Diplomat, Schreiner has worked hard to promote Nebraska

businesses with Japanese and Taiwanese companies interested in doing business in the U.S.

Fremont received the Community of the Year Award. The city recently yielded location and expansion projects totaling nearly \$70 million and creating 500 jobs. Business of the Year Awards went to The Buckle, Inc., in Kearney and Hornady Manufacturing in Grand Island. The Buckle, Inc. oversees 355 stores and 6,000 employees in 38 states. Hornady Manufacturing – the nation's largest producer of bullets – employs 180 people and markets its products throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, Iceland, New Zealand and Africa. The Power in the Partnership Award went to the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (Qwest Center). ■

## State Chamber's New Logo Wins Award

We are proud to announce that the State Chamber's revamped logo has been recognized and honored by advertising experts. The new State Chamber logo was designed by Bailey Lauerman in 2006.

The logo was entered in the 2007 Nebraska ADDY Awards competition under the category "Elements of Advertising." The judges deemed the logo was among the best in its category, awarding a Silver ADDY Award

to the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

The Nebraska ADDY Awards competition features the Advertising Federation of Lincoln and the Omaha Federation of Advertising, as well as state affiliates of the American Advertising Federation. These organizations were founded to promote, protect, and defend advertising interests, as well as to promote the efforts of philanthropic organizations

in individual communities.

The State Chamber is proud of the recognition and award honoring our organization's new logo. On behalf of thousands of State Chamber members, our appreciation goes to Bailey Lauerman for its hard work and dedication. The new visual identity serves as a constant reminder of the Chamber's mission and the vital role the organization plays in support of Nebraska's business growth.

## Leadership Nebraska Receives Grant As It Completes A Successful First Year

Thanks to State Chamber members and other generous individuals and foundations, the initial year of the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska is about to conclude with very positive results. So far the first year's class attended six sessions that featured top-notch speakers, an agricultural tour of Nebraska, first-hand experiences in state public policy, and the further enrichment and development of 27 of Nebraska's brightest leaders. Class members overwhelmingly would recommend the program to their friends and colleagues.

Leadership Nebraska was just awarded another challenge grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation for \$35,000. We will need your help to meet the match.

Leadership Nebraska identifies current and emerging leaders throughout Nebraska, enhances their leadership skills, and deepens their knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing our state. The program is dedicated to the development of informed leaders who understand issues, define problems, develop solutions, and achieve positions of higher responsibility in Nebraska.

To further strengthen the financial foundation of this exciting program, we are enlisting aid and support from corporations, foundations, and the public to ensure that Leadership Nebraska will benefit the state of Nebraska for years to come. A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization has been established. You may also wish to underwrite the tuition of some of your key employees or outstanding leaders in your community. Your support will help develop Nebraska's best and brightest to prepare to make their mark in our state's continued growth and development.

Enclosed is a pledge card for your support of the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program. For more information, please contact Executive Director Don Mihovk at dmihovk@nechamber.com, call the State Chamber office, or log onto [www.statechamberleadershipnebraska.com](http://www.statechamberleadershipnebraska.com).

## Legislative Report Goes Electronic in 2008

When Nebraska's Legislature reconvenes in January, the State Chamber's weekly *Legislative Report* will be delivered by e-mail instead of the U.S. Postal Service. This will ensure a timely delivery of this service. In addition, the bill status sheet, the bill digest and committee hearing notices will also be delivered electronically. To ensure you do not miss a single delivery of the *Legislative Report*, please e-mail your organization's name along with the e-mail addresses of recipients who wish to receive the *Legislative Report* to [kkoch@nechamber.com](mailto:kkoch@nechamber.com). Members who still want to receive hard copies instead of the electronic version must let State Chamber staff know of their preference. ■



On Oct. 4, State Chamber president Barry Kennedy addressed nearly 40 members of the Sutton Chamber of Commerce. Also pictured is Jerry Leach of the Sutton State Bank. The Sutton forum was the first of 33 Legislative Forums currently being conducted throughout Nebraska by State Chamber staff.

## 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.

### GRAND ISLAND

Bosselman, Inc.

Chuck Bosselman

Sponsor: Duane W. Acklie, Crete Carrier Corporation

### JACKSON

Albenesius Contracting, Inc.

Larry Albenesius

### LaVISTA

Nebraska Dental Center

Diane Vandewalle-Algya

### LINCOLN

Eagle Printing

Gary W. Ashmore

Rustad Dermatology

Elliott L. Rustad, M.D.

### MURDOCK

Oxbow Enterprises, Inc.

John Miller

### OGALLALA

Cobb Realty, Inc.

Diane England

### OMAHA

B2 Environmental, Inc.

Bob Arritt

The Nebraska Medical Center

Marty Beerman

NetShops, Inc.

Doug Nielsen

Sponsor: Rick Russell, Millard Lumber Inc.