

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER 
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry
December 2008



Season's Greetings



State Chamber's Annual Meeting February 5, 2009

One of the most prominent events for the Nebraska business community is approaching quickly. On Thursday, February 5, the State Chamber will hold its Annual Meeting and Legislative Caucus at The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. This is the State Chamber's largest event of the year – and several special guests plan to take part in the upcoming gathering.

Late registration will begin at 9 a.m., with the Board of Directors meeting starting at 10 a.m. Governor Dave Heineman will address the noon luncheon, which is open to all members. The afternoon will feature the annual business meeting, followed by three panel discussions regarding key business-related issues on the 2009 legislative agenda.

The evening will include a 6 p.m. reception and the annual banquet at 7 p.m. The traditional passing of the gavel

will feature 2008 Chairman G. Lee Glenn and 2009 Chairman Marc LeBaron. The Business Hall of Fame induction ceremony will begin at 8 p.m., with closing comments by Chairman LeBaron.

A registration form for the Annual Meeting and Legislative Caucus is enclosed with this issue of *The Executive*.

Also, the Annual Meeting offers an excellent opportunity to get your business recognized before a large target audience. Additional information is also enclosed. Businesses or organizations interested in sponsoring this important event should contact James Berringer at 402-474-4422 or jberringer@nechamber.com. ■

Health Care Costs Are Top Concern For Nebraska Businesses

A majority of Nebraska business leaders attending this year's State Chamber legislative forums said health care costs are the top concern for their operation or employer. That is the finding of a survey conducted by State Chamber staff, which visited 34 Nebraska communities this fall.

More than 1,300 people attended this year's forums, held each year to inform local leaders about recent legislative developments and to gather input from the business community. In addition, 56 state senators and candidates for the Legislature participated in the presentations, which were open to all members of the State Chamber and/or local chambers of commerce. Findings from the State Chamber's

2008 survey include:

- An overwhelming majority – 94 percent – of respondents supported Nebraska's Right-to-Work guarantee in the state constitution, while opposing proposals that would force non-union employees to pay union fees.
- Approximately 86 percent of respondents opposed expanding the coverage and cost of the Workers' Compensation program, including a recent plan to cover mental illness unaccompanied by physical injury.
- More than 40 percent of respondents indicated that employer-provided health care benefits pose the top financial challenge to their business or employer. State and local taxes

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State Chamber Views...

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Leadership Nebraska Fosters 'Nebraska Patriotism'

Recently I had the honor of graduating with 22 fellow Nebraskans from the State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska. The program immersed us in the issues facing Nebraska, challenged our beliefs and assumptions about the state, and forced us to face tough questions and find solutions.

Nebraska's best days are ahead, but challenges exist: the "brain drain" of students leaving Nebraska to create wealth in other states; a lack of entrepreneurialism needed to keep more Nebraskans in the state to start a business; the despair in some communities that often ushers the younger generation to someplace else.

To address these challenges at their core, Nebraskans could benefit from a change in perspective about who they are, an attitude shift – from a mere acknowledgement of being from a relatively small state, to a confidence that Nebraskans are eager to share a sense of "Nebraska patriotism."

This change in perspective is an innate sense of outward pride that becomes an identity. I see a Nebraska where its citizens think like this: We are a people. We are a nation. We are a culture. We are a force. We are a family. We are a movement. We are a network. We are the beneficiaries of our ancestors. We are settlers. We are pioneers. We are dreamers. We are doers. We are hard workers. We are Nebraska.

We must cultivate a sense of Nebraska patriotism. First, we ensure the continued success of Leadership Nebraska. It is critical to have a cadre of citizens educated about the issues and opportunities in Nebraska that inspires them to lead and challenges them to serve.

Second, we start within by growing

our own Nebraska "patriots," starting in schools. We need a much stronger Nebraska history and civics curriculum at all grade levels. The curriculum must excite and capture the imagination of young people about Nebraska. We need leadership from the top — parents, school teachers, coaches, mayors, state senators — all need to do their part to advance a sense of Nebraska patriotism.

We need better regional awareness and exchanges. Leadership Nebraska, for instance, has brought together Nebraskans from the big sky expanses of the Sandhills to the bright skylines of the urban east. Understanding regional perspective is critical. Knowing about each other's home communities fosters a shared understanding about the state and unifies it.

Third, we must welcome new Nebraska patriots. Immigration will continue and studies show it is vital to the state's economy and population growth. Nebraskans must help new arrivals assimilate to Nebraska's culture.

Nebraska patriotism has tangible benefits. It could provide a stronger loyalty to Nebraska when highly-educated people decide where to pursue their careers. It may spur investment and business creation from those who grew up here. For people who leave, it may cause them to return to Nebraska sooner. It has the potential to ignite ambition and innovation in rural areas of Nebraska and make hope the fertile ground for tomorrow's entrepreneurs.

I recently toured Homestead National Monument near Beatrice. It is a reflective and instructive place as a monument to the entrepreneurial spirit that built Nebraska. Nebraska's first entrepreneurs were railroaders, home-

steads, ranchers, business persons, and town builders. Entrepreneurialism is Nebraska's history and it must be Nebraska's future.

Some might say the idea of "Nebraska patriotism" sounds unbelievable. That is because Nebraskans have an admirable tendency to be pragmatic and unassuming. That is, of course, part of our heritage, part of our charm. But it is also part of our challenge. It is a fine line between pragmatism and cynicism, and without vigilance, assessments of practicality can descend into stubborn assumptions of impossibility.

Fostering a sense of Nebraska patriotism is only one facet of an initiative to retain and attract citizens that includes job expansion, economic vitality, and opportunity creation. But instilling a deeper devotion to Nebraska is an important component of the foundation on which we will pursue other goals.

Those of us who have been part of Leadership Nebraska must be more than cheerleaders for the state, we must be leaders. We have a duty to act. We must engage other Nebraskans and take on initiatives that will promote the broad notion of Nebraska patriotism and keep Nebraska moving forward. We all have a responsibility to motivate other Nebraskans to effect positive change for our future. ■

Health Care Costs

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(28 percent) and energy costs (15 percent) were also prominently mentioned.

■ Among the participants who cited health care costs as their operation's top concern, 42 percent said the best plan to address health care costs would be to "allow small businesses to pool their purchasing power to lower insurance premiums." Another 22 percent said the widespread use of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) would be the best way to lower costs, while another 16 percent preferred incentives for employees who practice healthy living habits. Only 8 percent cited universal health care coverage or government-run plans as their preferred method to lower health care expenses. ■

Chamber Welcomes New Senators to Lincoln

On the evening of November 12, members of the State Chamber executive council and staff welcomed the Legislature's next freshman class to Lincoln by hosting a reception and dinner for the senators-elect. The event, which has become a long-standing tradition in election years, was held at The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel and in conjunction with the New Senator Orientation. The 2009 legislative session begins January 7 and will feature 16 new senators.

Top: State Chamber President Barry Kennedy and Dist. 37 Senator-elect Galen Hadley of Kearney.

Bottom: 2009 State Chamber Chairman Marc LeBaron of Lincoln Industries, Lincoln, greets Dist. 11 Senator-elect Brenda Council of Omaha, as past State Chamber Chairman Richard Campbell looks on.



Fifty Percent of Your 2008 Dues Are Deductible

Your 2008 annual dues to the State Chamber are deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense. However, a portion of dues is not deductible as a business expense because of the organization's lobbying activity at the state and federal levels. The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry is a registered 501C(6) organization. The State Chamber dedicates a portion of every member's dues to lobbying and business advocacy.

As an advocate for the interests of our members – and as an association that commonly asks public policy makers for their support or opposition to legislation – not all of your businesses annual dues are deductible. Because of federal stipulations, 50 percent of your dues are deductible. The federal Budget Act of 1993 mandated that chambers of commerce and other organizations engaging in state and federal lobbying, and whose lobbying expenses exceed \$2,000, must calculate the amount of dues investments spent for lobbying purposes. ■

Plan To Attend State Chamber's D.C. Visit, May 12-13

The 2009 State Chamber congressional visit to Washington, D.C. is set for May 12-13. Next year's congressional visit will be held in conjunction with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Summit on Monday, May 11 at the Renaissance Washington, D.C. Hotel.

As in past years, participants on the State Chamber's congressional visit will have lunch with Nebraska's U.S. senators and congressmen, as well as senior members of their staffs. Attendees will also have the opportunity to attend the traditional Nebraska Breakfast. To help participants stay abreast of the latest policy issues and

developments, briefings will be held for participants at the headquarters of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

For those interested, the U.S. Chamber's Small Business Summit provides an opportunity for small business supporters to come together around common concerns, learn about pressing policy issues from the experts, and bring the collective voice of business to Congress. For more information on this summit or to register, visit www.uschambersummit.com.

With the changes coming to

Washington in 2009, it is important for members of the State Chamber and Nebraska's business community to maintain contact with their elected representatives. For more details about the State Chamber's congressional visit, contact Don Mihovk at (402) 474-4422 or dmihovk@nechamber.com. ■



Nebraska's Second District Congressman Lee Terry was honored earlier this fall with the National Association of Manufacturers' (NAM) *Award for Manufacturing Legislative Excellence*, presented to him at the headquarters of Union Pacific in Omaha.

The NAM award is given to members of Congress who achieve a rating of 70 percent or better on key votes affecting the U.S. manufacturing industry and its employees. In the most recent session of Congress, Rep. Terry received a 100 percent rating from NAM.

This year's NAM scorecard included votes on an attempt by labor union leaders to eliminate secret ballot elections in the workplace, as well as efforts to expand the domestic energy supply. The State Chamber is an affiliate of NAM and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Pictured from left: Barry Kennedy, President of the State Chamber; Robert Meaney, Senior VP at Valmont Industries and Chairman of the State Chamber's Manufacturers Council; Rep. Terry; TR Raimondo, Chairman of Behlen Mfg.; Loy Todd, President of Nebraska New Car & Truck Dealers Association and Chairman of the State Chamber's Taxation Council; and Kurt Yost, President of the Nebraska Independent Community Bankers. ■

Congressman Terry Honored With Manufacturers Award



2009 State Chamber Schedule

Jan. 7	Legislature Convenes
Jan. 13	Public Affairs Council Meetings Begin (Every Tuesday During Legislative Session)
Feb. 5	State Chamber Annual Meeting & Business Hall of Fame Induction
Feb. 6	Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives Annual Meeting
March 27	NCCE Spring Board Meeting
April 17	Hall of Fame Committee Meeting, Executive Council Meeting
May 12-13	Chamber Visit to Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.
June 5	Spring Board Meeting
June 7-11	U.S. Chamber Institute for Organizational Management, Madison, WI
Sept. & Oct.	State Chamber Legislative Forums
Sept. 11	Fall Board Meeting
Oct. 23	Executive Council Meeting
Dec. 8	Public Affairs Council Meeting
Dec. 11	Winter Board Meeting

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.

ATLANTA, GA

zyman group
David Morey

Sponsor: Dick Thompson, zyman group

GRAND ISLAND

Associated Staffing, Inc.
Brian McMahon

Chief Automotive Technologies

Randy L. Gard

Viaero Wireless
Steve Nielsen

HASTINGS

idea Bank Marketing
Ann Martin

LINCOLN

LPS
Mary Campbell

NORFOLK

Copycraft Printing
William Settell

OMAHA

LinkedIn
April Kelly

JA Mathis Company
Joe Mathis

Midlands Choice, Inc.
Linda Sufficool

Nebraska Chiropractic Physicians Association
Louis M. Andersen

Pinpoint Network Solutions
Linn Gowen

SCOTTSBLUFF

B & C Steel Corporation
Jim Reinhardt

WAVERLY

Waverly Area Chamber of Commerce