

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER



Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

March/April 2018

Bryan Slone is Nebraska Chamber's Next President

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry has announced that Bryan E. Slone will be the association's next president.

Slone will take the place of longtime State Chamber President Barry Kennedy, who recently announced that he will retire later this year after more than three decades at the chamber, including 19 years as the organization's president.

Slone will begin his role as chamber president on or around May 1.

"Nebraska and its business community have made great strides over the years, but numerous challenges are currently before us," Barry Kennedy said. "To keep our state moving in the right direction, our leaders must take steps now to make Nebraska more competitive, expand job growth and investment, and improve the quality of life for every Nebraskan. I'm confident Bryan Slone will ensure that the Nebraska Chamber

continues to lead this mission."

As an attorney and accountant, Slone brings more than three decades of policy and business experience to the State Chamber. He is currently a tax attorney at Koley Jessen in Omaha, where he advises business clients on legal matters related to taxation, administrative law, international law, mergers and acquisitions, and government affairs.

Before joining Koley Jessen – and following his 2014 candidacy for Nebraska governor – Slone was a managing partner for Deloitte, one of the nation's largest professional services firms, at the firm's Omaha office.

In the 1990s, he worked in East Berlin, Germany, as a tax attorney and partner for Wilmer Cutler & Pickering. Slone spent most of the 1980s in Washington, D.C., where he was legal advisor to the IRS commissioner and served as a House Ways and Means Committee staff

member under former U.S. Congressman Hal Daub. In this capacity, Slone helped shape the 1986 overhaul of the federal tax law.

Slone earned his law degree from the University of Nebraska College of Law, and his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A Nebraska native, he was raised in the panhandle and has lived in several Nebraska communities. Slone and his wife Leslie have two adult children, Steve and Lauryn. ■



Bryan Slone

Highlights from Nebraska Chamber's Annual Meeting

On February 1, the Nebraska Chamber held its 2018 Annual Meeting and Legislative Caucus at The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln.

At the morning board meeting, John Kirchner, executive director of congressional affairs with the U.S. Chamber's Midwest regional office,

discussed some of key federal issues that could impact the business community in 2018.

During the annual meeting luncheon, Governor Pete Ricketts spoke about his priorities for the new legislative session, while also honoring Nebraska's local chambers of commerce by proclaiming February as "Chamber of Commerce Month."

An afternoon discussion panel on Nebraska's workforce challenge featured three experts: Greg Adams, executive director of the Nebraska Community College Association; Dr. Dan Hohensee, director of the Lincoln Public Schools' career academy; and Allison Hatch, a

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Dirk Petersen, 2017 Nebraska Chamber chair, is recognized for his service by 2018 Chairman Rich Herink during the Chamber's Annual Meeting and Business Hall of Fame Banquet in early February.

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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State Chamber Views...

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NAFTA is Critical for Nebraska Jobs, Economy

Nebraska and its economy are dependent upon free trade, especially trade with America's neighbors. This fact was highlighted in a recent report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which found that Nebraska would be one of the ten states most negatively affected by the United States withdrawing from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

That is why we are concerned by threats from the White House to withdraw the United States from the trade agreement altogether. These threats must be taken seriously.

According to the U.S. Chamber, repeal of NAFTA would risk the following:

- Nearly 90,000 Nebraska jobs.
- More than \$2.6 billion in export revenue from Canada and Mexico.
- More than 40% of Nebraska's exports currently going to Canada and Mexico.

A trade agreement is like any other policy; it needs to be updated occasionally. As representatives of the business community, we agree with President Donald Trump's goal of modernizing the 23-year-old NAFTA.

But withdrawing from this valuable trade pact would be an economic disaster, especially for states such as Nebraska. After all, Canada and Mexico are Nebraska's top two trading partners.

In 2015 alone, the Cornhusker State exported more than \$8 billion of goods and services, a 238% expansion from a decade earlier. NAFTA has played a key role in this export growth, as well as in the creation the almost 300,000 Nebraska jobs supported by international trade.

Consider our state's manufacturing sector – the second largest driver of Nebraska's economy. Nebraska manufacturers exported roughly \$5.4 billion worth of goods in 2016. More than half of those exports were sent to free

trade agreement partners.

In fact, in 2015, Canada purchased more than 20% of Nebraska's manufactured goods, and Mexico purchased another 15%. Sales of manufactured goods to Canada and Mexico, made possible through NAFTA, support the jobs of more than 2 million manufacturing workers nationwide, according the National Association of Manufacturers.

Put simply, Nebraska manufacturing cannot afford to lose these valuable export markets.

Our agricultural producers and agribusiness sectors are equally dependent on NAFTA's continuation. Beef, corn, and soybeans are Nebraska's chief agricultural products, and the NAFTA market is critical for each. Right now, the vast majority of Nebraska's grain and oilseed exports (more than 90%) are being purchased by Canada and Mexico.

Nebraska is also a top beef exporting state, and Mexico is a critical market. However, withdrawal from NAFTA would lead to an increase in Mexican tariffs on beef from zero to 25%, a significant blow for Nebraska's beef producers and the farmers who depend on the livestock sector.

While trade agreements can always be improved, we cannot risk losing the market access and international partnerships that have allowed the United States to boast the world's largest economy.

Our message to our elected officials is this: NAFTA has strong, statewide approval from Nebraska's top business and agricultural leaders. This trade agreement has played a vital role for Nebraska businesses and agricultural producers by expanding market access, attracting new investors and lowering input costs.

For the sake of Nebraska's economy, NAFTA must be continued. ■

Barry Kennedy Recognized for Service to Nebraska's Business Community



During the Nebraska Chamber's 2018 Annual Meeting and Legislative Caucus held in early February, Governor Pete Ricketts and State Chamber Chairman Rich Herink recognized Barry Kennedy for his decades of service to the Nebraska business community.

Kennedy recently announced that he will retire later this year after more than 30 years at the chamber, including 19 years as the organization's president.

Inscribed on the award presented to Kennedy are the words: "The business community salutes you for 31 years of dedicated service."

A native of Salem, Nebraska, and a longtime resident of Pawnee City, Kennedy started his career at the Nebraska Chamber in January 1987, working under then-State Chamber President Jack Swartz. Prior to his work with the State Chamber, he worked as a political consultant managing several successful statewide campaigns. He also spent a decade as a livestock buyer for major meat packers and had his own farming operation.

Kennedy made his mark early in the business world, serving as state president for the Nebraska Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees). He then went on to be elected as president of the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce during a time of record enrollment for the organization. Later, he was elected as president of Jaycees' international division.

The Nebraska Jaycee Family of the Year Award is named for the Kennedys.

A Vietnam veteran, Barry served through the Tet Offensive of 1968.

Married to Diane, the Kennedys have two children and five grandchildren. Barry and Diane plan to stay in Lincoln for their retirement. ■

Highlights from Nebraska Chamber's Annual Meeting

This year's inductees into the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame are:



John L. Hughes of Hughes Brothers, Inc., Seward.



Joe Ricketts of TD Ameritrade, Omaha;



Thomas C. Smith of D.A. Davidson & Co., Lincoln; and

Below: J. Paul McIntosh (deceased), entrepreneur, Norfolk. Accepting the award for Mr. McIntosh was his son, Jonathan McIntosh and daughter, Jan Einspahr.



Below: Appearing at the Annual Meeting's "Legislative Leaders" panel were (from left) Senators Brett Lindstrom, Jim Smith, John Stinner and Speaker Jim Scheer.



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talent recruiter for the State Department of Economic Development. Much of the session focused on employers' needs for specific skills, whether in manufacturing, construction, health care, automotive technology, computer programming, information technology or other sectors.

"For too long, schools and parents have emphasized sending people to four-year colleges rather than at least exposing students to the possibility of good-paying vocational jobs," Adams said, pointing to a project by West Point schools and Northeast Community College to boost skilled labor and talented workforce in rural communities. Hohensee told chamber members that if an employer or community wants to retain young talent, they need to get them into an internship during high school.

A second discussion panel examined federal issues impacting Nebraska. The panel was comprised of John Kirchner from the U.S. Chamber, as well as Tyler Grassmeyer, deputy chief of staff for U.S. Senator Ben Sasse, and Nebraska Agriculture Director Steve Wellman. Topics ranged from trade deals and immigration, to infrastructure and the rewrite of the farm bill.

The traditional Legislative Leaders panel featured Speaker of the Legislature Jim Scheer, as well as Senators Jim Smith of Papillion, Brett Lindstrom of Omaha, and John Stinner of Gering. All four lawmakers addressed some of the top issues facing the Unicameral. Regarding the session's efforts to provide tax relief, Senator Smith said that reducing spending at the local level was the best way to ensure local tax relief. Speaker Scheer said that state lawmakers were not doing enough to encourage local spending control, but he noted that much of the new spending for education was due largely to social issues.

In the evening, approximately 600 chamber members and guests attended the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame induction ceremony and evening banquet. The event featured the passing of the gavel from 2017 State Chamber Chairman Dirk Petersen, retired vice president and general manager of Nucor Steel in Norfolk and current partner at Flood Communications, to 2018 Chairman Rich Herink, who is market president of First National Bank.

The evening concluded with the induction of the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame's newest members, who are:

- **John L. Hughes** – Hughes Brothers, Inc., Seward.
- **J. Paul McIntosh** (deceased) – Entrepreneur, Norfolk.
- **Joe Ricketts** – TD Ameritrade, Omaha.
- **Thomas C. Smith** – D.A. Davidson & Co., Lincoln.

State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska Honors 29 Graduates

On February 15, 2018, the State Chamber's "Leadership Nebraska" hosted a commencement ceremony in Lincoln to honor 29 individuals for their successful completion of the program's coursework and other requirements.

This is Leadership Nebraska's tenth group of graduates since the program's first class in 2007. Leadership Nebraska is focused on enhancing leadership skills and expanding participants' knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing our state.

By completing the program, informed leaders can better understand issues, define problems and develop solutions to serve their communities. Graduates of Leadership Nebraska are encouraged to seek positions of higher responsibility, whether at the local, regional or state level.

The program includes six two-day sessions held over several months in various locations across Nebraska. Topic areas include economic development, health care, agriculture, education, and government & policy.



The Leadership Nebraska Class X members who graduated in February are:

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| Paula Alder , Daycos, Norfolk; | Wyatt Leehy , Great Plains Communications, Blair; |
| Jason Bennett , Black Hills Energy, Lincoln; | John McHargue , Pinnacle Bank, Grand Island; |
| Jeremiah Blake , Charter Communications, Lincoln; | Jared Meays , The Harry A. Koch Co., Omaha; |
| John Dale , Ash Grove Cement Company, Louisville; | Chad Podolak , Nebraska Public Power District, Columbus; |
| Lucas Dart , University of Nebraska Foundation, Kearney; | Terry Rasmussen , NUCOR Steel Nebraska, Norfolk; |
| Jim Ediger , Hamilton Telecommunications, Aurora; | Elizabeth Roetman , Economic Development Council of
Buffalo County, Kearney; |
| Jared Gerdes , Ariens Company, Auburn; | Jodi Rowlett , State Farm Insurance, Lincoln; |
| Jason Gustafson , Wells Fargo Bank, Omaha; | Kim Semler , Ayars & Ayars, Inc, Lincoln; |
| Megan Hanefeldt , Knox County Development Agency,
Center; | Nicole Sedlacek , Nebraska Public Power District, O'Neill; |
| Randy Hawthorne , NonProfit Hub, Lincoln; | Quinn Texmo , JEO Consulting Group, Inc., Omaha; |
| Kare Heilbrun , State Farm Kare Heilbrun Agency, Gering; | Kiel VanderVeen , VanderVeen Financial Planning,
Nebraska City; |
| Alyssia Hernandez , State Farm Insurance, Lincoln; | Ben Watson , Chadron State College Foundation, Chadron; |
| Mitch Hunt , Huntrex LLC, Broken Bow; | Jon Watts , University of Nebraska-Kearney, Kearney; |
| Theresa Klein , Rural Futures Institute, Wahoo; | Kim Weiss , First National Bank, Omaha. |
| Michael Krings , Obstetricians & Gynecologists, PC,
Hastings; | |

Applications for Leadership Nebraska's next class may be submitted until April 13, 2018.

For more information, please contact Roberta Pinkerton at (402) 474-4422 or visit www.leadershipnebraska.com.

Council of State Chambers Honors Barry Kennedy

At the Council of State Chamber's (COSC) recent winter meeting, state chamber CEOs toasted their distinguished colleague Barry Kennedy, president of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on the eve of his retirement after more than three decades with the Nebraska Chamber.

Lew Ebert, (at left in photo) president & CEO of the North Carolina Chamber, along with Fred Morgan, (at right in photo) current chair of COSC and President and CEO of the Oklahoma Chamber, presented Kennedy – a past chair of COSC – with a distinguished service award on behalf of COSC and the state chamber community. The COSC newsletter read: "On behalf of all of us at COSC, thank you Barry for your counsel and guidance over the years, and we wish you and Diane all the best in your future endeavors!"

COSC was founded more than 70 years ago to promote cooperation among state chambers by facilitating the exchange of ideas regarding policies and practices. ■



Governor Ricketts Proclaims February as Chamber of Commerce Month



Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts proclaims February as Chamber of Commerce Month, presenting the proclamation to 2018 NCCE President John Hales and NCCE Advisory Council Chair Diane Poots.

At the State Chamber's 2018 Annual Meeting in Lincoln in early February, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts honored chambers of commerce throughout the state by proclaiming February as "Chamber of Commerce Month."

The governor's proclamation was presented to the leaders of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives (NCCE).

The proclamation states: "Chambers of commerce play a vital role in shaping Nebraska's future by promoting the free enterprise system that is essential

to the success of our society" – while also "providing leadership that helps create and foster an economic climate conducive to growth and development of our great state." The proclamation adds that chambers of commerce enhance the quality of life for our citizens.

Receiving the proclamation from the governor were 2018 NCCE President John Hales, vice president of the North Platte Area Chamber and Development Corp., as well as NCCE Advisory Council Chair Diane Poots, director of member services for the Greater Omaha Chamber. ■



State Chamber's D.C. Fly-In Set for April 25-26

The Nebraska Chamber's D.C. Fly-In will be held April 25-26, 2018. All members of the Nebraska Chamber and/or local chambers are invited to participate.

To register as a fly-in participant, e-mail jkarl@nechamber.com or call (402) 474-4422. Registration fee for the fly-in is \$95 per person to cover the cost of the Capitol Hill luncheon. (Please note: Participants must plan their own travel and lodging. The Chamber's \$95 registration fee does not include travel or lodging expenses.)

To reserve a room at The Beacon Hotel – just five blocks from the White House – call 800-821-4367 and be sure to mention you're with the Nebraska Chamber for your discount rate of \$269 per night. Deadline to book rooms is March 27. ■

State Chamber Awards Scholarships to Future Business Leaders

The Nebraska Chamber has awarded six scholarships for 2018. All six scholarship winners were honored at the chamber's Nebraska Business Hall of Fame banquet on February 1 in Lincoln, and each winner received \$2,500 to help with their education expenses.

The following is a list of the State Chamber's scholarships and this year's winners:

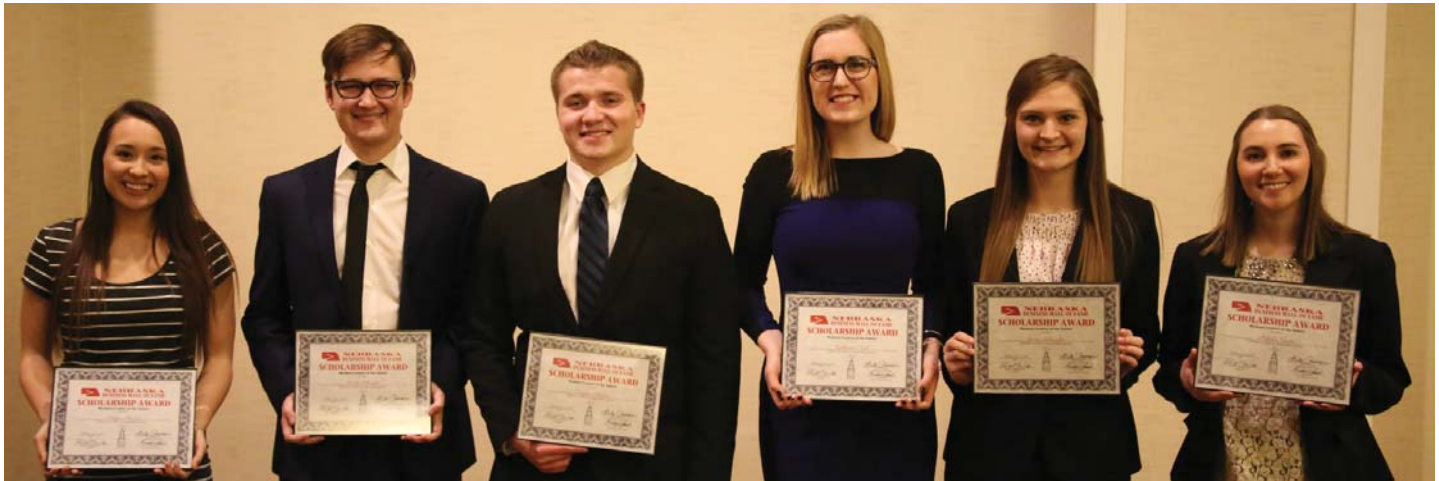
- **Robert and Cynthia Milligan Scholarship** was awarded to **Maya Mercer** of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Mercer is a sophomore from Nebraska City, majoring in marketing and management.
- **Moe Beardmore Scholarship** was awarded to **Grant Schirmer** of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Schirmer is a junior from Lincoln, majoring in actuarial science.
- **Roy Smith Scholarship** was awarded to **Treyten Nelson** of Peru State College. Nelson is a junior from Lincoln, majoring in business administration.
- **Jack Swartz Scholarship** was awarded to **Katherine Ford** of Creighton University. Ford is a junior from Omaha, majoring in marketing with minors in economics and

journalism.

- **Bob Harris Scholarship** was awarded to **Jenna Schroeder** of Nebraska Wesleyan University. Schroeder is a junior from Plattsmouth, majoring in accounting and communication studies.
- **Virgil Eihusen Scholarship** was awarded to **Natalie Knott** of Hastings College. Knott is a sophomore from Louisville, majoring in marketing and business administration.

The State Chamber has provided scholarship assistance to deserving students since 1997. To be eligible for a chamber scholarship, students must attend a recognized Nebraska college or university and be pursuing degrees in a business-related field of study. To date, 84 students have received State Chamber scholarships since inception of the scholarship program. All scholarship money is donated by chamber members to the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame Scholarship Foundation.

For more information on the chamber's scholarships and how to apply, contact Charlie Volnek at cvolnek@nechamber.com or call (402) 474-4422. ■



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. We encourage you to consider doing business with fellow chamber members.

BASSETT

Sandhills State Bank

David Gale

Recommended by: Dennis Swanson, Sandhill Equipment, Bassett

COLUMBIA, MO

Advance America

Julie Townsend

GRAND ISLAND

Central Community College

Matthew Gotschall

Recommended by: K.C. Belitz, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce

LINCOLN

Cleaver Brooks - EBS

Doug Hansen

MINNETONKA, MN

Medica

Noah Tabor

OMAHA

First Data Resources, Inc.

Maureen Graziano

Midwest Allergy & Asthma Clinic, Inc.

Jared Holland

National Electric Company, Inc.

Rick Milota

Recommended by: Allan Hale, National Electrical Contractors Assn., Nebraska Chapter, Omaha

ST. EDWARD

Stock Realty & Auction Co.

Andy Pyron

Recommended by: Scott Moore, Baird Holm Law Office, Omaha

WASHINGTON, DC

Enel Green Power North America, Inc.

Rob Stupar

WAYNE

Heritage Homes of Nebraska, Inc.

Rod Tompkins

Recommended by: Wayne Area Chamber of Commerce