

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER



Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

July/August 2012

Nebraska Chamber Descends On D.C.

In mid-May, more than 30 Nebraskans took part in the State Chamber's annual Washington, D.C. Fly-In. The Norfolk and Columbus Chambers were especially well represented this year. The fly-in was again sponsored by Nebraska Public Power District.

The highlight of the D.C. visit was the State Chamber's Congressional Luncheon, which featured remarks from Nebraska's U.S. senators and congressmen. The luncheon afforded attendees the opportunity to speak directly with the members of Nebraska's congressional delegation and their senior aides.

Participants also attended the traditional Nebraska Breakfast, held on Wednesday mornings for Nebraskans who are visiting our nation's capital. To help chamber members stay informed on the latest policy and political developments, issue briefings were held at the headquarters of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce – the State Chamber's national affiliates.

Key topics of discussion included the federal highway bill; the Keystone XL Pipeline; America's nearly \$16 tril-

lion debt; Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations; new rulemaking by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB); free trade agreements; and the farm bill.

Fly-in participants were also treated to a reception at the Washington offices of Husch Blackwell, LLP, where they heard remarks from former Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Chairman James Hoecker, who is now employed at the firm. ■



U.S. Senator Mike Johanns addresses the State Chamber's Congressional Luncheon held May 8 at the Capitol Hill Visitors Center.

Chamber's Federal Legislative Summit Set For August 16, 2012

What happens in D.C. can dramatically impact your business and bottom line. Plan to attend Nebraska's Federal Legislative Summit on Thursday, August 16, and get up to speed on the latest developments.

All the members of the Nebraska's congressional delegation have been invited, including U.S. Sens. Ben Nelson and Mike Johanns, and U.S. Reps. Jeff Fortenberry, Lee Terry and Adrian Smith.

This unique event is hosted by the Nebraska Chamber, as well as the Lincoln and Omaha Chambers. The Summit will again be held at the Strategic Air & Space Museum, located near Ashland (Exit 426) just off I-80. Doors will open at 11 a.m. and the event will begin at noon with a plated lunch.

Attendees will be treated to the following:

- ▼ A congressional update on important federal issues.
- ▼ New information from the "Forging Nebraska's Future" initiative;
- ▼ An update on the regional and U.S. economies; and
- ▼ A special presentation – "Election 2012: The Battle for the White House & Congress" – presented by the "We Ask America" polling firm.

For members of the Nebraska Chamber or local chambers, the cost is \$95 per person, which includes lunch. Cost for non-chamber members is \$125. To register, go online at www.lcoc.com. If you need assistance registering, call the State Chamber at (402) 474-4422. ■

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State Chamber Views...
Guest Editorial by Steve Ford,
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Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

'The Importance Of The State Chamber's D.C. Fly-In'

In May, more than 30 State Chamber members participated in our annual Washington, D.C. Fly-In. This was one of the largest groups to have ever participated in the fly-in.

While in Washington, we met with policy experts from the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to receive an update on the latest policy developments.

The following topics were discussed at length:

- The pending expiration of the Bush tax rates and other pro-growth tax provisions;
- Possible tax reform, including a lower corporate tax rate;
- Ongoing efforts by the EPA to expand and strengthen federal regulations on the energy sector;
- New rulemaking by the National Labor Relations Board to help increase labor union membership; and
- Reauthorization of the federal transportation and farm bills.

During the fly-in, we met face-to-face with each member of Nebraska's congressional delegation. The highlight of the fly-in was the State Chamber Congressional Luncheon, which provided chamber members and our elected officials – along with their senior aides – an opportunity to discuss important issues in a relaxed setting in the Capitol Hill Visitors Center.

During our luncheon, Senator Johanns briefed us on potential upcoming tax increases, including the federal estate tax. Senator Nelson shared his thoughts on the need for

Congress to return to a more bipartisan, cooperative environment. Congressman Fortenberry spoke about the need to reduce the federal debt, while Congressman Terry discussed energy policy and his efforts to expedite the Keystone XL Pipeline. Congressman Smith updated the group on his House Ways and Means Committee activities.

Our fly-in participants attended the traditional Nebraska Breakfast, a longstanding tradition in which our U.S. senators and congressmen meet with fellow Nebraskans visiting Capitol Hill.

Nebraska's business community needs to remain vigilant and up-to-date with what is taking place in Washington. I am proud of our association's efforts and the individuals who committed their time and resources to be part of this year's D.C. Fly-In.

Thanks To Our Representatives

It has been said often that our voting rights need to be exercised regularly. The same holds true with staying in touch with our representatives. That is why the D.C. Fly-In is an important event.

What goes on in Washington has a major impact on our operations and profitability. We are fortunate to live in a state in which our federal representatives are easily accessible and willing to discuss important issues. This kind of relationship does not exist in every state.

State Chamber members should note that all five members of Nebraska's federal delegation have been recognized by the U.S. Chamber and the NAM for their pro-business votes on significant issues. That's another

claim that few other states can make.

I thank our delegation for their service to Nebraska and their concern for our state's business community. They do listen and it is very important that business leaders convey their concerns along with appreciation for their accomplishments. While we do not always have to agree on every issue, the open dialogue is important.

Business Must Lead

It was a special honor to lead the Nebraska Chamber to D.C. during our century celebration. A hundred years ago, the State Chamber embarked on our mission of representing and defending Nebraska's business community, protecting the system of free enterprise, and working constructively with government whenever possible to establish the right policies. A century later, that is still our main mission.

There will always be real challenges for those of us in the business community. But whether the debate occurs in Washington, D.C., or at the state and local levels, bigger government is not the answer to rebuilding the economy. It has been tried in the past and has never been successful.

Free enterprise is the responsibility of individuals and the private sector, which can and will restore confidence, job creation, entrepreneurship and the American Dream.

The State Chamber will continue to work hard to educate our elected representatives – in the state and inside the beltway – on steps they can take to ensure that the nation and Nebraska keep moving forward. ■

Update Your E-mail Address

If you have recently changed your e-mail address – or have not yet provided it to us – the Nebraska Chamber asks you to send your current e-mail address to Kay Koch at kkoch@ne-chamber.com, or call (402) 474-4422. By providing your e-mail address, you will get the most from your State Chamber membership, including subscriptions to the State Chamber's News Update and the weekly Legislative Report (published when the Legislature is in session).

Leadership Class Returns From Western Nebraska Tour

The State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska program is now in its sixth year of helping to foster the dynamic leaders of Nebraska's future. Members of this year's Leadership Nebraska class (Class VI) recently returned from their economic development tour of western Nebraska, which featured stops in Kearney, Gothenburg, Ogallala, Scottsbluff, Gering and North Platte.

Members of the class come from all across the state and have various career backgrounds, including health care, economic development, education, utilities, finance, agriculture and retailing. Class VI includes: Andy Alexander, UNO, Omaha; Klint Andreas, Cabela's, Sidney; Wes Blecke, Wayne Chamber of Commerce; Jeff Buettner, CNIPPD, Holdrege; Leslie M. Carlholm, Community Development Director, City of Imperial; Garry Clark, Cuming County Economic Develop-

ment, West Point; Jill Denker, Lexington Regional Health Center, Lexington; Tim Erickson, AIM, Lincoln; Cory Fuehrer, NPPD, Central City; Elaine Hanson, Peru State College; Kevin Jarosz, Black Hills Energy, Papillion; Karen Kliment, Community Hospital, McCook; Nathan Phillipi, Expanxion, Kearney; Chad Rutar, Renaissance Financial Investments, Elkhorn; Jason R. Smith, F&M Bank, West Point; and Jill Watkins, LES, Lincoln.

The class met for the first time in May at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City for its orientation session. The agriculture session will be August 1-3 in O'Neill; the health and human services session will be September 12-14 in Omaha; the education session will be October 17-19 in Kearney; the government and public policy session will be January 22-24 in Lincoln; and the commencement ceremony will be February 6 in Lincoln.



The State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska develops leaders who want to use their talents and abilities to foster a new spirit of energy, enthusiasm and vitality throughout the state. Nebraskans in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s are selected to participate in the program. They come from different regions of the state and have varied backgrounds. But all have one common characteristic: an abiding interest in Nebraska and its future. For more information or an application, call Don Mihovk, Executive Director of Leadership Nebraska, at (402) 474-4422 or e-mail dmihovk@nechamber.com.

Energy Expert Updates Chamber Members

In late June, Matthew Koch, Vice President for the U.S. Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy, briefed more than 40 members of the Lincoln Chamber and Nebraska Chamber. Koch's visit to Lincoln was part of a 10-state tour to update the business community on how federal actions are hindering the U.S. energy market. More than two-thirds of Nebraska's electricity is generated by coal-fired plants and the U.S. has a 250-year supply of coal, according to Koch. But recent rulemaking by the U.S. EPA has punished the coal sector and utilities. As a result, Nebraska has dropped from having the fifth lowest cost of electricity in 2009 to the 12th lowest in 2012, according to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. Addressing oil production and transportation fuel, Koch said that last year, the average U.S. household spent more than \$4,000 on gasoline -- about \$1,000 more per household than in 2010. Meanwhile, only 2.2% of America's offshore acres are currently leased for energy production. As a result, crude oil imports totaled \$20.9 billion per month out of an average monthly trade deficit of \$41.5 billion in 2010. If the U.S. ended its dependence on imported oil, the nation's trade deficit would be cut in half. ■

Save The Date: Chamber Economic Forums

The Nebraska Chamber is pleased to announce that in recognition of our 100th Anniversary, the Chamber will host "Century 2012: An Economic Futures Forum." This event will be held Nov. 12 in LaVista and Nov. 13 in Kearney. It will feature nationally-recognized speakers from the Tax Foundation, American Legislative Exchange Council and other organizations to address key topics impacting Nebraska's economy, workforce and population.

Among the topics to be discussed: Nebraska's economic and tax com-

petitiveness; educational innovation; strategies for a successful economic future; and technology and innovation in business. The first forum will be held at the LaVista Conference Center on Nov. 12, beginning at 10 a.m. The forum will be repeated at the Kearney Holiday Inn Convention Center on Nov. 13, also beginning at 10 a.m.

Look for more information in the State Chamber's electronic News Update, or call (402) 474-4422. ■

State Chamber Announces Fall Legislative Forums Schedule

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry, in cooperation with local chambers across the state, will present its annual legislative forums in September and October.

The forums are held every autumn to inform and gather input from the business community on issues of concern.

Members of the State Chamber, local chambers and the news media are invited to participate. State senators and legislative candidates will also be invited.

This year's forums will focus on the Legislature's recent session, while providing a glimpse at how Nebraska compares to other states in economic competitiveness rankings.

This year's forums will also showcase the State Chamber's new "Forg-

ing Nebraska's Future" initiative. For a detailed schedule, e-mail Jamie Karl at jkarl@nechamber.com.

Forum locations for this fall are:

Wahoo – Sept. 5 (noon);
Aurora – Sept. 10 (noon);
Beatrice – Sept. 11 (noon);
O'Neill – Sept. 24 (noon);
Bassett – Sept. 24 (6 p.m.);
Broken Bow – Sept. 25 (8 a.m.);
Ord – Sept. 25 (noon);
Columbus – Sept. 26 (7 a.m.);
Fremont – Sept. 26 (noon);
Sarpy County – Sept. 27 (8 a.m.);
Bellevue – Sept. 27 (11:45 a.m.);
Norfolk – Oct. 1 (11:30 a.m.);
Kearney – Oct. 2 (8 a.m.);

Grand Island – Oct. 2 (noon);
Hastings – Oct. 2 (6 p.m.);
Alliance – Oct. 9 (7 a.m.);
Scottsbluff – Oct. 9 (noon);
Ogallala – Oct. 10 (7 a.m.);
Sidney – Oct. 10 (noon);
North Platte – Oct. 11 (7 a.m.);
Lexington – Oct. 11 (noon);
York – Oct. 15 (noon);
Auburn – Oct. 16 (noon);
Nebraska City – Oct. 17 (noon);
West Point – Oct. 18 (7:30 a.m.);
South Sioux City – Oct. 18 (noon);
Blair – Oct. 22 (noon);
Omaha – Oct. 23 (7:30 a.m.);
Lincoln – Oct. 24 (7:30 a.m.);
Plattsmouth – Oct. 25 (11:30 a.m.);
McCook – Oct. 30 (7:30 a.m.);
Holdrege – Oct. 30 (noon).

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.

ARLINGTON

Dwyer Photography
Micheal Dwyer

BEATRICE

Worldlawn Power Equipment, Inc.
Hardy Shao

Recommended by: Robert M. Schafer, Carlson, Schafer & Davis, PC, LLO

COLUMBUS

Columbus Community Hospital
Michael Hansen

Recommended by: Anthony F. Raimondo, Jr., Behlen Mfg. Co.

FONTANELLE

Nebraska Irrigated Seeds
Dave Monke

HASTINGS

Go Electronics/CDS
Robert Lent

Recommended by: Jack A. Schreiner, Bruckman Rubber Co.

LINCOLN

Lincoln Independent Business Assn.
Coby Mach

Recommended by: William Harding, Harding & Shultz P.C., L.L.O.

NORFOLK

Tegrea, Inc. dba/The Granary
Robert D. Rea

NORTH PLATTE

AJ Sheet Metal, Inc.
Todd Bissell

OMAHA

Blackman & Associates PC
Dennis Blackman

Recommended by: Steve Ford, Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co.

Lueder Construction Co.

Brad Von Gillern

Recommended by: Lori L. Hogan, Home Instead Senior Care

Packaging Corporation of America
Dan Baker

Roberts Dairy Co.
Ron Benefiel

Signal 88 Franchise Group
Reed Nyffeler

Recommended by: Lori L. Hogan, Home Instead Senior Care

PLATTSMOUTH

Cass County Bank
Douglas Duey

Recommended by: Annette Wiles, Wiles Development

WEST POINT

F&M Bank
Phil Burns

YORK

York Equipment, Inc.
Steve Ermer

2012 Nebraska Chamber D.C. Fly-In



Top Left: U.S. Senator Mike Johanns greets State Chamber Chairman Steve Ford (middle) and State Chamber President Barry Kennedy (right).



Top Right: Fly-in participants are briefed on key legislative issues at the new headquarters of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM).

Right: U.S. Representative Jeff Fortenberry speaks with Norfolk Chamber President Dennis Houston and Norfolk Mayor Sue Fuchtman.



Bottom Left: U.S. Congressman Lee Terry, a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, provides an update on his work to expedite the Keystone XL Pipeline project.

Bottom Right: Fly-in participants gather outside the headquarters of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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2012 Nebraska Chamber D.C. Fly-In



Above: During the reception at the Washington offices of Husch Blackwell, LLP, fly-in participants heard from former Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Chairman James Hoecker, who is now with the firm.



Left: U.S. Congressman Adrian Smith updates the fly-in participants on his activities in the House Ways and Means Committee.

Bottom Left: U.S. Senator Ben Nelson meets with Bruce Bohrer, Vice President & General Counsel for the Lincoln Chamber.

Bottom Right: Fly-in participants learn about the latest policy developments in the U.S. Chamber's briefing room.

