

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER



Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

July/August 2014

Nebraska Chamber Visits Washington, D.C.

On June 10-11, more than two dozen Nebraskans took part in the State Chamber's annual Washington, D.C. Fly-In.

This year's D.C. fly-in featured a guided tour of the Pentagon, the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense, and a 30-minute meeting with Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, a Nebraska native and former U.S. senator. Participants were able to get a first-hand look at the secretary's office, which has changed very little from 1943, when the building was opened.

Another highlight was the State Chamber's Congressional Luncheon on Capitol Hill, which featured remarks from both of Nebraska's U.S. senators and all three congressmen. The members of the congressional delegation focused most of their comments on issues being addressed by the committees on which they serve. The luncheon also allowed Chamber members to speak directly with the members of Nebraska's congressional delegation and their senior aides.

The fly-in also included policy and political briefings by U.S. Chamber staff. Among the areas covered were

tax reform, energy, EPA regulations, online sales tax authority, and health care. Rob Engstrom, the political director for the U.S. Chamber, provided an in-depth look at some of the key congressional races around the country, while gathering input from participants about Nebraska's congressional contests.

Other activities included the traditional Nebraska Breakfast, a reception at the Washington offices of Husch Blackwell, LLP, and a private dinner at The Oceanaire.

The event was sponsored by the Nebraska Public Power District, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Nebraska, and TransCanada. ■

Fly-in participants visit Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in his office at the Pentagon.

Senator Deb Fischer and Congressman Adrian Smith speak to Nebraska Chamber President Barry Kennedy (left) and Nebraska Chamber Chairman Chris Roth (right) at the Nebraska Breakfast on Capitol Hill.

Congressman Jeff Fortenberry chats with Kearney Senator Galen Hadley, State Chamber Chair-Elect Kim Russell and Mick Jensen.

Congressman Lee Terry addresses the State Chamber's Congressional Luncheon held at the Capitol Hill Club.



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State Chamber Views...

Guest Editorial by Chris C. Roth

President & CEO, Reinke Mfg. Co.

Chairman, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

'My First Six Months as State Chamber Chairman'

It is hard to believe, but my term as State Chamber chairman is more than half complete. So far, I've learned much from this experience, with the foremost lesson being the need for unity within our business community.

Nebraskans, especially those in the business world, are a self-reliant lot. We look after our own operations and industry concerns. We mind our own products and services – we meet our own payrolls.

But we must be mindful of our fellow business leaders. We must stay on top of the issues that impact our own business, as well as the employer community at large.

In short, we're all in this together. The more frequently the Nebraska business community speaks with one unified voice, the better it is received by state and federal policymakers.

As chairman of your State Chamber, I've heard other Chamber members discuss their concerns, and I'm convinced that the Nebraska Chamber is one of the most effective tools we have of unifying our efforts to successfully current challenges – from marketplace issues, to the workforce, to government regulations and taxes.

Spring Board Meeting

In May, it was my pleasure to host the State Chamber Board of Directors spring meeting in Grand Island. The highlight of the meeting was a tour of the Career Pathways Institute (CPI), a cutting-edge educational facility that has been in operation since August 2013.

The most frequently cited concern that the State Chamber hears from its

members is the lack of qualified and skilled employees. A recent Nebraska Chamber survey found more than half of nearly 450 respondents (52%) had experienced difficulty in hiring qualified employees during the past year. More than one in four respondents said the lack of available labor or skilled employees was the key issue limiting their business' growth.

With this in mind, our board members took great interest in the CPI, which is working to prepare high school students for a career and/or college. The Grand Island career academy provides technical skills in fields such as information technology; manufacturing; welding; architecture and construction; transportation and auto repair; health sciences; and business management. High school juniors and seniors attending the CPI can earn dual high school and college credit. Just as important, they will have the skills they need to enter the workforce directly after high school, or to go on to a two- or four-year institution.

Look for more efforts like this to emerge across the Cornhusker State. For example, Lincoln Public Schools is currently preparing its own career academy – a \$25 million collaboration with Southeast Community College to train high school juniors and seniors in industrial and technical subjects and provide internships and college credit.

And this isn't just an urban concern. In Deshler, Reinke Manufacturing — my employer — has partnered with Deshler Public Schools to produce more trained welders of all ages. This is a collaboration between Reinke, the school administration, the Deshler School Board and Southeast Com-

munity College. The program, which adheres to American Welding Society standards, is designed to teach high school students during the day and adult education at night.

Washington D.C. Visit

The State Chamber's June 10-11 visit to Washington, D.C. provided members a first-hand look at the federal issues facing employers and businesses of all sizes. During our time on Capitol Hill, we enjoyed ample time with both Nebraska's senators and all three House members, discussing the concerns facing our state's business community.

One highlight of the D.C. fly-in was our tour of the Pentagon and meeting with Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, Nebraska's former U.S. senator. Additionally, the fly-in included the State Chamber's annual congressional luncheon on Capitol Hill, which featured remarks from all five members of Nebraska's congressional delegation. Nebraska is extremely fortunate to have such an accessible, approachable and helpful group of federal representatives. We are grateful for their time and attention to the concerns of the business community.

We are in a time of significant change in Washington, D.C. Never before have so many issues been placed on the agenda with such a short timeline. You can be assured that the Nebraska Chamber staff is working with our national affiliates – the U.S. Chamber and the National Association of Manufacturers – to address the concerns that are negatively affecting our Chamber members. ■

Federal Legislative Summit is August 7 at Air & Space Museum

What happens in D.C. can dramatically impact your business and bottom line. Plan to attend the 2014 Federal Legislative Summit on Thursday, August 7, and get up to speed on the issues. This unique event is hosted by the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry, along with the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

The event will once again be held at the Strategic Air & Space Museum near Ashland, just north of Exit 426 on I-80.

The summit offers a timely opportunity for Nebraskans to hear about the latest developments on federal areas of interest – from taxes to regulations to energy policy to highway funding.

Among the planned highlights:

- ▼ Updates from all five members of Nebraska's U.S. senators and congressmen.
- ▼ Presentations from the major candidates for U.S. Senate and Nebraska governor.
- ▼ Keynote presentation by Rob Engstrom, the national political director for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. (CT) sharp and conclude by 1 p.m. A buffet lunch will be served. Doors will open at 7:30 a.m., allowing networking time for chamber members.

The morning's first event – the Congressional Update – mirrors the traditional Nebraska Breakfast held on Capitol Hill and provides Nebraskans a chance to hear from all their federal representatives at once, without having to travel to Washington, D.C.

To register online, go to www.nechamber.net and look for the online registration tab under "Events" in the left-hand column. Or call the State Chamber at (402) 474-4422.

For members of any chamber of commerce in the state, the cost is \$95 per person, which includes lunch. For non-chamber members, the cost is \$125. ■

Leadership Nebraska Class VII Begins



The State Chamber's Leadership Nebraska held its opening session on June 4-6, as the 25 members in the program's Class VII met at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City. The Leadership Nebraska program, which was founded in 2006, helps identify current and emerging leaders throughout Nebraska, enhances their leadership skills and deepens their knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing our state.

Class VII will conduct five more sessions for the following locations: western Nebraska in August; the Omaha metro area in September; Kearney in October; Norfolk in November; and Lincoln in January. A commencement ceremony will be held in February 2015. ■

The members of Leadership Nebraska's Class VII are:
Ben Allemann, National Research Corporation, Lincoln;
Karl Barfuss, NUCOR Steel Nebraska, Norfolk;
John Barrett, Great Plains Communication, Omaha;
Amy Brown, Bluffs Sanitary Supply, Scottsbluff;
Daren Buettner, NUCOR Steel Nebraska, Norfolk;
Jon Burt, Aksarben Foundation, Omaha;

Juli Comstock, Omaha Public Power District, Omaha;
Brad Fooker, Glass House, Fremont;
Melissa Garcia, Custer Economic Development Corporation, Broken Bow;
Brandy Johnson, Black Hills Energy, Lincoln;
Corrie Kielty, Nebraska CASA Association, Lincoln;
Scott Kvols, Pinnacle Bank, Hastings;
Tara Lea, Ralston Area Chamber of Commerce, Ralston;
Jessica Meyer, Consortia Consulting Inc., Lincoln;
Judy Mitchell, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, Omaha;
Terry Rajewich, Nebraska Public Power District, Scottsbluff;
Jim Reiff, Nebraska Enterprise Fund, Oakland;
Chris Sommerich, Humanities Nebraska, Lincoln;
John Sullivan, BCDM Architects, Omaha;
Michael Swope, AIM Institute, Omaha;
Randy Throener, BKD, LLP, Lincoln;
Patti Vannoy, Mattson Ricketts Law Firm, Lincoln;
Terry Warth, Sr., Nebraska Public Power District, Columbus;
Mike Wilken, Beacon Insurance, Kearney; and
Walker Zulkoski, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Lincoln.

State Chamber Visits Ft. Carson to Promote Nebraska Opportunities

In late May, State Chamber staff and a group of other Nebraskans traveled to Colorado Springs, Colo., to be part of the Fort Carson Military and Veterans Employment Expo. The visit was part of the State Chamber's workforce development campaign titled, "The Good Life for Veterans" – which aims to make Nebraska the preferred destination for individuals and families separating from America's armed forces.

This was the third military jobs fair since February attended by the Nebraska Chamber, as well as representatives of several Nebraska employers and community colleges.

The State Chamber and the Nebraska Department of Labor -- with the help of numerous partners -- have collected the names and information of more than 300 active military personnel and veterans who have expressed interest in working and residing in Nebraska. The information has been shared with employers, as well as local chambers of commerce.

For more information, go to www.The-GoodLifeForVeterans.com. ■



U.S. Army Major Loren Groves was the winner of the \$100 Cabela's gift card drawing at the Ft. Carson, Colo., jobs fair. He told State Chamber staff: "Thank you for your time and passionate desire for promoting the great state of Nebraska. I'm definitely open to the possibility of finding future employment within your state."

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.

BURWELL

Burwell Chamber of Commerce

David Sawyer

COLUMBUS

Mastercare Patient Equipment Inc.

Mary Novotne

IMPERIAL

Imperial Chamber of Commerce

Sue Moore

LA VISTA

Millard Manufacturing Corp.

J. Michael Price

LINCOLN

Eagle Group

Matt Ashmore

Husker IMG Sports Marketing

David Witt

Natural Bed

Ronald Larson

Referred by: Brian Hamilton, Beardmore Subaru, Inc.

Sensory Effects Cereal Systems

Greg Russell

MADISON

Eisenmann Supplies Inc.

Don Eisenmann

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Public Affairs Company

Nate Prouty

NICKERSON

Monke Brothers Fertilizer

Rick Tucker

NORFOLK

Flood Communications

Mike Flood

Petersen Ag Systems, Inc.

Henry Aschoff

Quick Draw Tarpaulin Systems, Inc.

Alan Schieffer

NORTH PLATTE

U-Save Pharmacy

Bill Snodgrass

OGALLALA

Holzfasters Equip. Inc.

Michael Holzfasters

PLATTSMOUTH

OFC/Schmidt Liquid Trucking

Josh Schmidt

Referred by: Annette Wiles, Wiles Agribusiness LLC

SEWARD

Kapstone Container Corporation

David Hunt

WAKEFIELD

Naturally Recycled Proteins

Brian Boeshart