

NE CHAMBERS ASSOCIATION FALL CONFERENCE

October 9-11, 2024

Holdrege, Nebraska



**SEASONS OF CHANGE,  
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**



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Join us at the **Nebraska Chambers Association Fall Conference**, where Chamber of Commerce executives from across the state will gather to collaborate, innovate, and lead. Under the theme "Seasons of Change, Strategies for Success," this year's conference blends the vibrant energy of the autumnal season with practical insights on strategic leadership, local reinvestment, digital marketing, advocacy, and more. With a focus on growth and progress, the conference will empower leaders to shape their communities, harness new technologies, and drive meaningful impact. Featuring expert panels, networking opportunities, and actionable takeaways, this event is designed to elevate Chamber leadership and inspire the future of Nebraska.

## REGISTRATION

Cost \$125/person

Register at [nechamber.com](https://nechamber.com)

## LODGING

### Cobblestone Inn & Suites

- Use code [CHAMBER OCT 2024 MEETING](#)
- \$90/night plus tax (breakfast included)

### Rodeway Inn

- Contact Upjeet Sahota at (308) 999-3602 after 2 p.m. to reserve Chamber rooms.
- \$79/night plus tax for a single queen (breakfast included)
- \$89/night plus tax for a double queen (breakfast included)

## DOWNLOAD

Get the [DISCOVER 37](#) mobile app for conference contests, session information, and all things Holdrege and Phelps County.



## DON'T FORGET TO BRING

- Please bring a **silent auction item** to benefit the NE Chambers Association's scholarship program.
- **Your colors!** Show your spirit by wearing your Chamber's apparel (or nametag) on Thursday.



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## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

### Wednesday, October 9, 2024

3:30 p.m. **Bronze Sculpture Scavenger Hunt** (optional)  
Download our **DISCOVER 37** mobile app to follow along with our exclusive NE Chambers Association version of Holdrege's famous bronze sculptures. This Scavenger Hunt showcases our best highlights. Most points gets a prize!



4:30-7 p.m. **Welcome Reception**  
Find your way to the Lost Way Brewery. You can try a craft brew, special seltzers, and homemade soda pop at one of Holdrege's favorite hangouts. Say 'Hi' to owner and former chamber executive, Jessica Kraus, while eating Braxton's Smokehouse BBQ. As the evening progresses, get ready to play music bingo. The town turns out for this event, so prepare to fight for the prize!  
*(Shhh: Secret menu items Lori & Adam love: frozen seltzer with Nerds and the Mac 'n Cheese.)*

### Thursday morning, October 10, 2024

7:00 a.m. **Breakfast at your hotel**


8:30 a.m. **Welcome | The Holdrege Sun Theater & Event Venue**  
Show your spirit by wearing your chamber's branded apparel (or nametag). Set out your Chamber's auction contribution on the dedicated tables in the Mezzanine.

 8:45 a.m. **Regional Relationship Building | Matt Williams, Chair Flatwater Bank**

 9:30 a.m. **Brick by Brick | Holly Rahmann, PMHC Director of Marketing & Business Development**  
Phelps Memorial Health Center's strategic innovation is leading to a healthy economic community.

10:00 a.m. **Break**

10:15 a.m. **Best Chamber Practices Panel Discussion**  
Get your varsity-level tips and tricks, while learning about pitfalls to avoid to scale the growth of your chamber and community in the following areas:

 **Social Media & Digital Marketing**  
Adam Hernandez | Communications & Events Coordinator, Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce  
Rylie Mills | Marketing Director, Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce

 **Advocacy**  
Jonathan Jank | President/CEO, Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership

 **Member Engagement & Networking**  
Christine Torres | Director of Membership & Development, Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce  
Leslie Clark | Executive Director, Auburn Chamber of Commerce

 **Special Event Planning: Don't Reinvent the Wheel, Be the Hub**  
Lauri Havranek | President/CEO, O'Neill Area Chamber of Commerce  
Amber Holle | Executive Director, Falls City Chamber of Commerce

 **Non-Dues Revenue Acquisition**



#### LEGEND



Networking | Collaboration



Innovation | Ideas



Growth | Strategy



Advocacy

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE CONTINUED

## Thursday afternoon, October 10, 2024

-  11:30 a.m. **Group Photo & Order Lunch, sponsored by Black Hills Energy**  
After our group photo, enjoy lunch at Ra-Ca's. Owner Willis Courville combines his cajun upbringing with his wife's Mexican background for their food truck menu. Courville is one of our success stories. He attended a business start-up class at the Holdrege Chamber, started a food truck, and is now transitioning into a bricks and mortar restaurant downtown.
-  Noon **Leading with Purpose, Growing with Gratitude | William Yank, Keynote Speaker, sponsored by Phelps Memorial Health Center**  
Enjoy your meal while Will shares anecdotes from his three-year battle with cancer that transform perspectives on how to approach and appreciate life. He builds off a set of foundational values that he believes are critical for living a life in gratitude.
-  1:00 p.m. **Brand Alignment: A Key to Authentic Connections | Tina Joyce & Jamie Riha, Unanimous**  
In today's competitive landscape, brand alignment is crucial for fostering trust and loyalty among customers and key stakeholders. We'll explore the significance of aligning your brand's values, messaging, visuals, and overall customer experience across all touchpoints. Attendees will see examples of how consistent branding enhances recognition, drives engagement, and strengthens relationships with target audiences. We will discuss ways to audit your brand and develop strategies to ensure all aspects of your brand align with your core values—leading to greater impact and long-term success. Join us to discover the #1 factor contributing to a unified brand presence that inspires and connects!
- 1:45 p.m. **Break, sponsored by the Phelps County Visitors Committee**
-  2:00 p.m. **Being AI-Thentic: Staying True to Your Brand While Saving Time | Adam Hernandez, Communications & Events Coordinator, Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce**  
Explore practical ways to use artificial intelligence (AI) right now to save time and enhance your organization. Learn how to integrate AI tools that align with your mission, maintain your brand voice, and boost efficiency—all while staying authentic. This session will cover simple, actionable strategies that help professionals leverage AI to streamline their workflow and engage more effectively with their audience.
-  2:30 p.m. **Optimize and Thrive: Tech Tools That Cut Costs and Boost Efficiency | Lori Larson, CEO, Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce**  
Take a brief tour of free or low-cost websites and apps tailored for small to medium-sized businesses, including your chamber! These affordable technologies streamline key functions like accounting, project management, marketing, and HR, saving time and reducing operational costs. By leveraging tools that offer features like business planning, CRM, and cloud-based collaboration, businesses can enhance productivity and efficiency without needing a large team.
-  2:30 p.m. **An Update on 6 Regions, ONE Nebraska | Dena Beck, Central Regional Navigator & Zane Francescato, Southeast Regional Navigator**  
*6 Regions, One Nebraska* is an economic development initiative that assesses the assets and economic resources of each community college region to create tailored action plans for regional benefit.
-  3:00 p.m. **Connecting Talent Across Nebraska | Shonna Dorsey, Aksarben Foundation**  
*Statewide Resources and Aksarben Engagement Opportunities through internNE.*
-  3:45 p.m. **National Political Update | Micah Olson, US Chamber of Commerce**  
*This presentation focuses on the importance of advocacy, our current political context, and ensuring a pro-growth future.*
- 4:15 p.m. **Silent Auction closes**
-  5:30-8:00 p.m. **Evening Reception**  
The Drive Golf & Lounge is the ultimate high-end cocktail lounge and entertainment venue with two top of the line golf simulators to play. These Boston financial advisors came back to Phelps County to expand their business and bring a vibe where New York meets Las Vegas in the center of the Heartland. The gaming room downstairs will have catered food to enjoy, while you can see who gets the closest to the pin or has the longest drive on the simulator. No experience or clubs necessary! Dinner and drink ticket included.





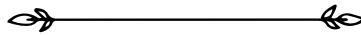
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### CONFERENCE SCHEDULE CONT.

#### Friday morning, October 11, 2024

- ☕ 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast at The Holdrege Sun Theater & Event Venue, hosted by Nebraska Public Power District**
- 📅 9:00 a.m. **Annual NE Chambers Association meeting**
- 🕒 9:30 a.m. **Passing the Torch: Succession Planning for Aging Business Leaders | Luke Deaver, DeWald Deaver L'Heureux Law Firm**  
Resources to share: Hear from an experienced attorney about guiding aging business owners through the complexities of succession planning. His session will cover key legal and financial strategies to ensure a smooth transition of leadership, preserve business continuity, and protect the owner's legacy.
- 10:00 a.m. **Break**
- 📅 10:15 a.m. **Nebraska Chamber Update | Bryan Slone, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry**
- 🕒 10:45 a.m. **Eliminating the Barriers to New Programs: A NE Chambers Association Opportunity | Kevin Hensel, Senior Consultant & Dave Orrick, VP Client Success**  
Many Chambers want to implement new programs but have difficulty removing the obstacles and getting over the finish line. Learn about BetterCulture's "First Year Free" initiative, brought to you by the NE Chambers Association. The "First Year Free" initiative helps remove barriers and allows Nebraska Chambers to implement creative workforce solutions in response to member business challenges.
- 🕒 10:45 a.m. **30 Chamber Ideas in 45 minutes**  
Bring your latest and greatest ideas to inspire our statewide colleagues to grow their chambers and towns.
- Noon **Wrap Up Conclusion**



**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS**  
for supporting chamber work throughout Nebraska

