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CHAMBERvision

Lincoln Chamber of Commerce



MAY 2008

CHAMBERvision

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Notes from the President

LEGISLATIVE SESSION A GREAT SUCCESS



Wendy Birdsall

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce stands for Lincoln interests at all levels of government. One of the most important aspects of our successful public policy program is our advocacy for the Lincoln business community and the general interests of the community at the state level.

In the past, we have successfully advocated for road funding, tax cuts for businesses and individuals, performance based tax incentives, training funds for Nebraska workers and research and development initiatives.

However, this year was probably our most successful year at the Nebraska Unicameral in my nearly 20 years at the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

We have several key agenda items each year that we work with our local delegation as well as other State



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CHAMBER events:

MAY, 2008

[Click Here](#) to register for events

May 7

8:00 a.m.

Chamber Coffee

Chamber of Commerce,
 Lincoln Room
 Sponsored by Aquila

May 7

Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Ambassadors

Chamber of Commerce,
 Lincoln Room

May 8

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Young Professionals Group:

YPG Netquirting Event

BMW of Lincoln - 6833
 Telluride Drive

May 9

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Small Business Network

Chamber of Commerce,
 Lincoln Room

May 13

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Young Professionals Group:

Becoming a Board Member

Lancaster County Extension

Senators and the Governor's office to advance. We also have started a community effort to work with local organizations and individuals to develop a consensus on a community agenda. From these consensus building efforts, we identified three priorities in 2008:

- Innovation Campus at State Fair Park
- Arena Funding
- Road Funding

In all, we had bills that addressed all three of these priorities in addition to two of our Opportunity Agenda priorities (business incentives and tax reduction).

A summary of the bills is included in this newsletter. I would encourage each of you to read the items closely and see what may apply to your business or what community priority you may have that was addressed.

While as a staff, we are excited with the new possibilities for items such as Innovation Campus, the new arena and the Super Advantage for Nebraska Advantage, we don't have time to rest on our laurels.

Over the next few months, there are a number of community issues that we will continue to monitor and work with local officials to address. Additionally, we will be making a trip to Washington D.C. this month to meet with our Nebraska delegation to work on federal issues that will benefit Lincoln including highway funding and research and development partnerships.

Our ultimate goals in the area of public policy are to reduce the tax burden on Lincoln businesses and Lincoln residents and to assist in maintaining the tremendous quality of life we all enjoy. As a Chamber, we believe that the only way to achieve both of these objectives is through the growth of quality jobs and the attraction of new business investment.

All of our public policy objectives relate to this core belief.

I look forward to continuing to work for Lincoln and our business community.

Office, 444 Cherry Creek Road

May 14

12:00 Noon

Face the Chamber with State Treasurer Shane Osborn

Country Club of Lincoln

May 15

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Young Professionals Group:

Becoming a Board Member

Ameritas, 5900 O Street

May 20

8:30 a.m. - Noon

In Focus Seminar Series:

Conflict Resolution in the Work Place

Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Room

May 21

8:00 a.m.

Transportation & Public Works Forum

Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Room

May 22

4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Business After Hours

Sponsored by Rembolt Ludtke

The Grand Manse (129 N 10th Street)

May 26

OFFICE CLOSED

Memorial Day

May 28

8:00 a.m.

Public Policy Forum

Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Room

Sponsored by Grubb & Ellis/ Pacific Reality

LINCOLN'S YPG NAMES TOP YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AND EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

Thank you for the opportunity.



LINCOLN FARED WELL IN THE 2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Through a collaborative effort of a number of local organizations and businesses, as well as tremendous support from the Lincoln delegation, five of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce's top priorities were addressed.

Following is a summary of bills that passed this session:

Roads and Infrastructure

- LB 846 (Fischer) - Will provide for a new formula in calculating gas tax and transfers \$15 million from the cash reserve fund to the roads operations cash fund to provide state matching funds for federal earmark projects. This bill received broad bipartisan support and will provide more road funding for Lincoln.
- LB 959 (Flood at the Request of the Governor) - The state budget bill includes about \$14.5 million in additional funding for the Department of Roads to cover costs of employee pay negotiations settled late in 2007. This will allow spending authority to be used for roads and is projected to increase the state gas tax by about 1.2 cents.

Innovation Campus

- LB 1116 (Erdman) - A number of bills came forward regarding State Fair Park and Innovation Campus. Sen. Erdman's bill provided that State Fair Park would transfer to the University of Nebraska in 2010. The University will pay \$21 million as part of the bill to assist in moving



Young Professional of the Year

Liz Ring Carlson is the Heartland Zone Public Affairs Assistant Manager for State Farm. Her responsibilities include the management of the Public Affairs Specialists in a six state zone in the upper Midwest as well as the internal communications department. Liz is a longtime Lincoln resident and a proud graduate of Lincoln East High School. She graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in History and an emphasis in Leadership Development.

Liz currently serves on the Board of Directors for the YWCA of Lincoln and the Lincoln Community Playhouse. Another passion is politics. Liz has worked on many political campaigns, fundraising activities, and grassroots projects. Her leadership, enthusiasm and energy are focused mostly on getting young people involved in the political process. In both 2000 and 2004, Liz was elected as a Delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

Liz has been active in the Young Professional Group (YPG) since its inception and she strongly believes in the potential of the YPG to impact the city of Lincoln. She worked to have State Farm become a Founding Sponsor of the YPG. Liz is active on the Political Voice Committee and she and her team at State Farm recently hosted a Legislative Breakfast at State Farm. Liz also served as Lincoln Chamber Ambassador in 2007 and attends several chamber events on behalf of State Farm.



YPG's Employer of the Year

National Research Corporation (NRC) is the result of decades of commitment to creating a patient-focused healthcare environment, using measurement and quality improvement tools to drive responsiveness and change.

Founded in 1981, NRC has maintained a strong commitment to improving the quality of healthcare received by patients and consumers through a focus on continual improvement in patient experience and performance

the fair with the City of Grand Island, the State of Nebraska and the State Fair Board paying the remaining. The Chamber worked diligently with city officials to retain the state fair, however, in spite of the ultimate decision, the move clears the way for a tremendous economic opportunity.

Small Business

- LB 888 (Burling) - Will expand the lower tax bracket for corporate income tax filers from \$50,000 to \$100,000. The measure provides direct tax relief to businesses, with the biggest impact coming for small business.
- LB 956 (Schimek) - Will create a sub-account for small business training utilizing the interest in the Nebraska Advantage Training Fund. The legislation also give priority to community college job training services. The Nebraska Advantage Training Fund was created by a coalition of business leaders including the Lincoln Chamber. The Chamber whole-heartedly supported this measure as well.

Arena Financing

- LB 912 (Avery) - Allows communities to use sales taxes from private hotels to assist in the financing of arenas. This measure is estimated to generate \$700,000 a year towards the construction of the West Haymarket Arena, a tremendous amount of funding that will require no tax increases.

Economic Development

- LB 895 (Janssen at the request of the Governor) - Creates a new high wage tier that will increase performance-based incentives for new or expanding companies. The measure will be used aggressively to attract high-income jobs. To qualify, companies must by at least 200% of county wages (\$66,000 in Lancaster County).

In addition to playing offense on the

measurement within the healthcare industry.

NRC is always actively recruiting and retaining young professionals. The young professional is the heart and soul of NRC - and maybe more importantly, they're its spirit! In fact, 72% of the company is less than 40 years old and 51% of the senior leadership at NRC are young professionals.

One of NRC's primary strategies for attracting young professionals is to capture their attention and recruit their talents while they're still in college. Their vision is that the 20-something employees of today become the 30- and 40-something managers and leaders of tomorrow.

There is no way that NRC would be as successful as it is today - or will be in years to come - without the passion, spirit and vision of their young professionals.



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Business profile:

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above issues, the Chamber also played defense and helped successfully turn back several bills harmful to our business climate. As a whole, we see the Legislative trends to be leaning more favorably to a pro-business perspective on public policy that encourages private sector growth. The Governor's leadership and that of key legislative leaders such as Senator Mike Flood, are cause for optimism. Our Lincoln-area delegation of senators: *Senator Bill Avery, Senator Tony Fulton, Senator Carol Hudkins, Senator Amanda McGill, Senator Ron Raikes, and Senator DiAnna Schimek* all deserve our thanks for working together for the betterment of Lincoln and the state. If you have a chance, please thank them.

The Chamber also extends our appreciation to our active membership for their involvement in making our public policy efforts a success. We know that we can't do it without the help of our active members, our leadership, and our policy forum sponsors Grubb Ellis Pacific Realty, Aquila and The Schemmer Associates.

LANCASTER COUNTY ESTABLISHES VISITORS IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT

Lincoln attractions will have a new opportunity to improve and enhance their facilities.

The opportunity comes through a new grant program established by the Lancaster County Visitors Promotion Committee and the Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). The program is designed to support a wide range of projects to attract visitors and will be funded by lodging tax income for visitor improvement.

Jeff Maul, executive director of the Lincoln CVB said that a small group of committee members and representatives from the Lancaster County Board put the new program together.

"It's a program that is long overdue," said Jeff Maul, executive director of the

Our ACT exam prep instruction is personalized; private tutoring that gives students test-taking strategies and shows them how to apply their knowledge to all questions on the ACT exam.

Chamber Experience:

Being new to Lincoln, I try to attend as many Chamber events as I can. I belong to the Ambassador's and enjoy going to the ribbon cutting and Business After Hours events. I also try to attend the Chamber Coffee and Public Policy forums. In addition I attend the Small Business Networking group that meets on Friday morning.

Chamber member for 1 ½ years.

I renew my Chamber membership because:

The many opportunities it affords me to network with other business people. I also support the advocacy the LCOC provides on behalf of the citizens and businesses of Lincoln and the surrounding area.

Key to success in business:

Not only give the customer what they need and want, but to provide services that exceed the customers expectations.

I'm most proud of:

Being able to contribute to the success of students in school but watching their skills, confidence and motivation to do well in school change for the better.

How long in Lincoln:

Huntington Learning Center has been in Lincoln for 15 months.

Favorite Web Site:

Besides www.huntingtonlearning.com it has to be www.lcoc.com

Favorite Quote:

"and so my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." By JFK.



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Lincoln CVB. "We will be able to work with a number of our wonderful attractions and provide a new resource to bring in more visitors to the community. Our goal is to enhance a visitor's experience to the community which will attract more people to Lincoln. But at the same time, this program will improve quality of life for Lincoln residents."

Awards are granted twice a year, based on merit, as determined by the Visitors Promotion Committee and the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. Grants will be administered by the Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau. Applications will be available to attractions during the summer of 2008.

INNOVATION TOPIC FOR ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP BREAKFAST

Robert Atkinson, President of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, will be the keynote speaker at this summer's annual Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development breakfast.

The event is set for 7:30 a.m., June 19th at the Cornhusker Hotel.

The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation is a Washington DC-based technology policy think tank. Atkinson has authored the *State New Economy Index* series and the book, *The Past and Future of America's Economy: Long Waves of Innovation that Power Cycles of Growth*.

Atkinson has an extensive background in technology policy; he has conducted ground-breaking research projects on technology and innovation, is a valued adviser to state and national policy makers and is a popular speaker on innovation policy nationally and internationally.

"We are excited to have someone with Mr. Atkinson's knowledge and credentials speak at our event," said Partnership President Wendy Birdsall. "With our community's focus shifting to an innovation economy; it will be

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enlightening to get the point-of-view of a national expert."

The annual breakfast is one of the more popular community economic development events and has featured such distinguished speakers as economic development consultant Angelos Angelou and Dr. Ned Hill, economic development professor from Cleveland State University.

Atkinson will address a number of issues relating to innovation in the U.S. and its impact on states and communities.

Before moving to the Foundation, Atkinson was Vice President of the Progressive Policy Institute and Director of PPI's Technology & New Economy Project. Additionally, he was the first Executive Director of the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council, and was project director at the former Congressional Office of Technology Assessment. While at OTA, he directed "The Technology Reshaping of Metropolitan America," a report examining the impact of the information technology revolution on America's urban areas.

For more information on the event, contact Jaime Henning at 436-2366 or jhenning@lcc.com.

Face the Chamber with Athletic Director Tom Osborne

Sponsored by:



CHAMBER MEMBERS ENCOURAGED TO VOTE ON MAY 13TH



The Nebraska Primary Election is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13. The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce encourages all eligible voters to do

their part and vote.

There will be several issues on the ballot with interest to Lincoln Chamber

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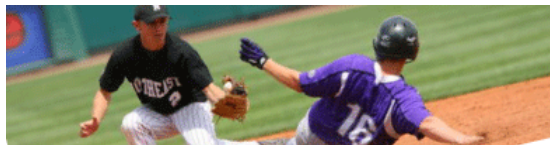
members:

- 1) The Lincoln Chamber supports using bonds to extend the financing of a new jail over a longer term.
- 2) The Lincoln Chamber supports Amendment 1. This amendment allows for the diversification of investments relating to an endowment fund.
- 3) The Lincoln Chamber supports the City Charter Amendment relating to purchasing contracts involving street improvement contracts.

In addition to these three issues, there will be several county and state races of interest. The Lincoln Chamber asks you to support pro-business candidates. As an election service to you, the Chamber will have the results from our candidate questionnaires on our website.

Please visit www.lcoc.com and click on the public policy page. These questionnaires should be available after Tuesday, May 6.

Remember to let your voice be heard and Vote!



STATE BASEBALL RETURNS TO LINCOLN

The NSAA State Baseball tournament returns to Lincoln, May 10-15.

Teams from around the state will descend on the community for the week of action in all classes. Schedules will be determined the week before the event. For times and locations, visit the NSAA website at www.nsaahome.org.

Locations will be Sherman Field, Den Hartog and Hawks Field at Haymarket Park. The eight-team double-elimination tournament begins the spring tournament season in

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Lincoln. In addition to baseball, NSAA will be hosting several classes of state golf tournaments and state tennis tournaments in Lincoln.

"We are proud partners with NSAA," said Jeff Maul, executive director of the Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau. "The impact of these events is enormous for our community and we will continue to work hard to maintain and grow this partnership."

Along with NSAA events, Lincoln remains a favorite destination for athletic tournaments and conferences.

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AFTER HOURS**
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CHAMBER MEMBERS GET PRIVATE BRIEFING ON BUDGET SURVEY

It's going to be a tough budget year again in 2008 according to the Mayor's office. A budget gap of \$6 million will force Mayor Chris Buetler to make some tough choices in the upcoming budget season. Despite that impending news, the mayor's staff also says there are reasons for optimism based on community input.

The comments came at the Chamber's Public Policy Forum. The forum featured Steve Hubka from the Budget office and Rick Hoppe from the Mayor's office as well as Dr. Liz Neeley and Tarik Abdel-Monem. Neely and Abdel-Monem are members of the University's Public Policy Research Center.

The University's Public Policy research center conducted two budget surveys for the city. The first one, conducted by phone, asked residents to identify budget priorities and their preferred method of payment. The second survey, called a "deliberative discussion", involved a focus group comprised of about 50 men and women who participated in the original phone

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survey.

The key findings from the phone survey showed the majority of residents show public safety and economic opportunity to be key budget priorities. Not as high on the list were quality of life issues such as libraries, parks and recreation and public transportation. Only 15 percent were in favor of tax increases to help pay for priorities. Additionally, those surveyed indicated that business and community organizations should focus funding on economic opportunity first followed by health issues and quality of life issues.

The "deliberative discussion" or in-person group survey was similar in placing public safety and economic development as top priorities. However, an interesting aspect of the group discussion was the change in opinion regarding issues such as taxation and satisfaction with services. Those numbers changed substantially when comparing pre-survey versus post-survey. For instance, the willingness to see an increase in taxes increased from 16% to 34.7%, a number of which the Mayor's office was cautious.

"We're not as concerned about how much that number changed as much as the fact that it did change," Hoppe said. "We must do a better job of taking the big picture and educating the entire facts about the budget process and the tough decisions we face."

Hubka indicated that the overwhelming response for public safety fell in line with City of Lincoln priorities.

"We currently have 40 percent of our budget in public safety," Hubka said. "I think the process showed support for all of the programs that we fund. If you look at the priorities, on a scale from one to 10, nothing was below a six. I think if we had something in the two to three range, we might have to rethink our funding."

Hubka said the Mayor's office would introduce a budget June 23 and that adoption was scheduled for Aug. 25.



CHAMBER CELEBRATES BUSINESS GROWTH WITH RIBBON CUTTINGS AND GROUND BREAKINGS

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce considers every one of its nearly 1,500 members a partner in the pursuit of quality growth for our community and job growth and retention for Lincoln area residents.

The Lincoln Chamber facilitates and celebrates business growth and success. As companies relocate, add employees or invest in additional capital, or want to reintroduce themselves to the local business community, we'd like to honor their success with an official Lincoln Chamber ribbon cutting or groundbreaking.

Research shows that 63% of consumers are more likely to buy from Chamber members. All member businesses are given a Chamber window decal and may request an official Chamber ceremony for their business. Ribbon Cuttings and Groundbreakings are managed by Kathy Hale in the Membership Office. She can be reached at (402) 436-2385, khale@lcoc.com.

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