

**LINCOLN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CONSENT AGENDA
February 11, 2010**

PUBLIC POLICY

FEBRUARY PUBLIC POLICY MEETINGS

- Wed. 2/3, 8:00 – 9:00 am Chamber Coffee
Sponsored by: Black Hills Energy
- Th. 2/4, 8:00 – 9:30 am Public Policy Steering Committee meets to discuss and provide guidance on local, state, and federal policy issues.
- Tues. 2/9, 7:00 – 8:30 am Business Executive Roundtable meets to discuss common issues faced by business owners and develop/share best practices and approaches toward solutions.
- Wed. 2/17, 8:00 – 9:00 am Transportation & Public Works Forum
Topic: **State Senator Kathy Campbell** will talk about her State Infrastructure Bank proposal for major road/bridge projects and update our membership on other transportation and public works issues pending before the Legislature.
Sponsored by: The Schemmer Associates
- Wed. 2/24, 8:00 – 9:00 am Public Policy Forum
Topic: Featured guest **State Senator Lavon Heidemann**, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee will discuss budget and revenue issues likely to develop during the Legislature's 2010 legislative Session and beyond.
Sponsored by: Grubb & Ellis Pacific Realty

LOCAL ISSUES:

Haymarket Arena Development – The West Haymarket project will be before the City Council for a public hearing on February 8, 2010. The ballot language, the memorandums of understanding between the University and the City regarding the use of the arena, and the creation of a Joint Public Agency will be processed as Council Resolutions. Wendy Birdsall and Nick Cusick will present testimony on behalf of the Lincoln Chamber in support of all three items on the agenda. Lobbying efforts leading up to the hearing indicate the vote will be unanimous in favor of all three items.

Biennial budgeting – The City of Lincoln is exploring a move to biennial budgeting. To do so would require the citizens to approve a charter change. The only way to approve a charter change is through a ballot initiative. The Mayoral administration would like to pursue this change as soon as possible. The Lincoln Chamber's Public Policy Steering Committee has expressed initial support for the ability to budget biennially. However, state law currently says a biennial budget must be enacted during an odd year. The original intent of wanting a biennial budget in Lincoln was because a newly elected mayor and city council are forced to prepare and approve a budget within weeks of being elected. A biennial budget would allow newly elected officials some time to get the feel for their new office before preparing an official budget. Due to the fact that Lincoln holds its elections in the odd years, Councilman Jon Camp suggested holding off on the issue until they could seek a state law change to allow Lincoln to shift to

even years. The issue is currently under investigation. It will not appear on the May ballot, but it could appear on the November ballot.

Impact fees – Following the final report of the Impact Fee Task Force headed by Chamber Chair Nick Cusick, Mayor Chris Beutler indicated he would like to proceed with two of the task force's recommendations. One would change the number of impact fee districts from seven to four. Currently, there are not enough impact fees being generated in any one of the seven districts to complete a public works project. By lowering the number of districts, the city hopes to be able to at least do one project in each district. The other would be to eliminate a provision in the ordinance that requires the city to refund an impact fee if it's not used within seven years. The refund causes problems because it is often hard to identify who exactly paid the fee. It also often takes more than seven years to accumulate enough funds to complete a project, so to refund some of the money would further delay these projects

SAR/Fast Forward Fund – Check of the Fast Forward Fund shows just over \$6 million remains in the fund. Those monies are currently drawing interest so the fund can grow over time. The Lincoln Chamber has made it a priority to work with the Mayor's office and the Lincoln City Council to identify an economic development project in which to use the funds.

Greg Maclean meeting – The Chamber's Transportation & Public Works Steering Committee met with Public Works & Utilities Director Greg Maclean in January. The group discussed ways in which the Lincoln Chamber can become involved in helping form the City's Capital Improvement Program. The discussion also centered on upcoming roads projects, department funding, and the general direction of the department when it comes to developing and growing our community. Greg told the committee that the major projects the public would see occurring this spring and summer will be the Antelope Valley Project and the resurfacing and rehab of roads through the stimulus package.

ARRA/Stimulus plans – Bidding is currently underway or has been completed for the bulk of the American Relief and Recovery Act (Stimulus) projects. The list includes A Street from 63rd to just past Imperial Dr. – Van Dorn from Normal to 70th – Holdrege from 19th to 25th – 70th St. from Adams to Aylesworth – Vine from 70th to 84th – O St. from 15th all the way to 84th St. Parts of Adams, Holdrege and N. 70th will also be widened to allow for a center turn lane and better traffic flow.

Antelope Valley Audit – State Auditor Mike Foley is still planning to release and audit of the Antelope Valley Project. The initial target date was the first part of January. However, the city has said the auditor's office continues to request information. Therefore, it is currently unknown when the audit will be complete and released.

2-to-1 Match – The City's efforts to lower the 2-for-1 retirement match has yet to be completed. The legislation that would have lowered the benefit has continued on final reading for months now. It is unclear at this time if the city intends to proceed with their promise to lower the match from 2-to-1 to 1-to-1 to better align itself with the private sector.

Development Services Center – The City's new DSC is scheduled to open for business in March. The renovations are on track to meet that schedule. The new center takes up all of second floor. It also makes way for Public Works, Building and Safety, Urban Development, and the Planning Dept. to all co-exist in the one office space. To make room, the mayor's office will move to the 3rd floor with the city attorney's office. The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce supported the DSC concept and is pleased with its progress so far.

STATE ISSUES:

2010 Legislative Session Overview – The Legislature will be busy with floor debate and committee hearings in February. The budget and revenue concerns will continue to overshadow the session as policy makers and others anxiously look to the February 26th meeting of the State Revenue Forecasting Board to see whether they will again adjust state revenue projections downward.

The Chamber has offered supporting testimony on legislations related to updating the NE Advantage Act provisions related to data centers and software development; expanding statewide tourism opportunities; placing the HWY Trust Fund in the state constitution; and creating a legislative task force on Innovation and Entrepreneurship to develop a statewide strategic plan on economic development efforts for high-wage employment.

The Chamber also continues to work closely with Senator Deb Fischer, Senator Kathy Campbell, Mayor Chris Beutler, District1 HWY Commissioner Rod Vandenberg, and several others to secure more funding for roadway needs, including Lincoln's \$175M South Expressway project. This long-term project will require federal, state, and local commitments. In coming years, the urgency for the Lincoln South Beltway project will only increase with the increased heavy truck traffic on HWY 2 and the resulting increased safety concerns. Later in the month, the Chamber will offer support for Senator Kathy Campbell and Tim Gay's proposal to create a State Infrastructure Bank that would support bonding and partnering on major projects in the state, such as the Lincoln South Expressway. The Chamber is also staying active, defensively in many instances, on proposals related to workers compensations & unemployment insurance programs, wind energy development, and public employee pay reforms (CIR).

Chamber to Update State Opportunities Agenda for 2010

The Public Policy Steering Committee has reviewed and forwarded with a recommendation of approval an updated 2010 State Opportunities Agenda. The Chamber's state agenda remains largely in tact from 2009, though minor edits were made to reflect completed agenda items from 2009 that no longer need be included. The Board will take up the issue for passage at the February meeting.

Lincoln Chamber to Host Leadership Groups from Beatrice, Fremont and Ogallala in February

The Lincoln Chamber will host members from the Beatrice, Fremont and Ogallala Chambers of Commerce for a legislative and community leadership luncheon on February 17th. This is the third year Lincoln Chamber leaders will host this event for Chamber leaders from other NE communities to talk about legislative issues, tourism and CVB-related issues, economic development and YPG efforts. Wendy and our leadership team at the Chamber will make presentations during the event, which will also feature a presentation from Governor Dave Heineman and State Chamber President Barry Kennedy.

Sen. Kathy Campbell to Address Transportation and Public Works Forum

Senator Kathy Campbell will be the featured speaker at the February 17th Transportation and Public Works Forum, which begins at 8:00 a.m. at the Chamber offices. She will provide a review of her proposal to create a State Infrastructure Bank which is aimed at developing a rational bonding program for major projects and partnering with locals in the process. The Lincoln South Expressway is a major project that would be eligible under her proposal. Senator Campbell serves on the Transportation & Telecom committee and will also give a rundown of other transportation related issues and prospects in the future.

Sen. Lavon Heidemann to Address Public Policy Forum

Senator Lavon Heidemann, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, will be our featured speaker at the February 24th Public Policy Forum, which begins at 8:00 a.m. at the Chamber offices. He will provide a review of revenue/budget issues pending before the legislature and look ahead at likely budget scenario's for the upcoming state budget biennium for 2011/13. Senators Tony Fulton and Danielle Conrad, both of whom serve on the Appropriations Committee, have also been invited to join us.

FEDERAL ISSUES:

Fortenberry to Convene Small Business Summit on Health Care Cost Containment

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry will convene a small business summit on February 17th, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, 5401 South Street in Lincoln. The Congressman has invited a panel to discuss best practices currently being implemented and is interested in hearing ideas and challenges from business owners.

If you interested in attending, please RVSP to Scot Blehm at Scot.Blehm@mail.house.gov.

Lincoln Chamber Leaders Ask Senators to Oppose Controversial NLRB Nominee

The Lincoln Chamber has joined in the efforts lead by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to oppose the nomination of union lawyer Craig Becker to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The U.S. Senate HELP Committee advanced the Becker nomination Thursday on a party-line vote, setting up a floor vote the week of February 8th. Mr. Becker serves as the associate general counsel for both the AFL-CIO and the Service Employees International Union, and is an extremely controversial choice for the NLRB. Several senators have raised objections to the radical policies espoused by Mr. Becker, who favors restricting employers' rights in the workplace and even hindering the reporting of illegal conduct during union certification campaigns. Concerns have been raised that Becker, an avid proponent of "card check" could lead the advance of this type of policy change by using administrative action via the NLRB.

Card Check Returns?

National business lobbyist and organizations such as the U.S. Chamber are concerned that Card Check legislation and other efforts to undermine the secret ballot option in union elections may return to the federal legislative efforts, as U.S. House and Senate majority leaders look for ways to shore up their base heading into what is predicted to be a very tough mid-term election cycle. The Lincoln Chamber is opposed to "Card Check" legislation and will remain active and active in state and national efforts to fight back any efforts on this front.

Lincoln Chamber among Long List of Groups Signing Letter on Health Reform to Congressional Leaders

Prior to the Massachusetts special election, the Lincoln Chamber joined with nearly 800 other chambers of commerce and businesses from across the country in sending the following letter to Speaker of the U.S. House Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Senate Leader Harry Reid:

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Reid:

Employers are united with the Members of Congress in both parties who understand that ever-rising health care costs are threatening the viability of U.S. businesses and job security for millions of Americans. Collectively, America's employers provide health coverage to over 170 million Americans, and we have a major stake in achieving meaningful reform of our health care system this year. We want to help to enact legislation that will:

- Bend the cost curve for the overall health care system
- Improve the long-term fiscal outlook for federal and state governments
- Produce greater quality and value in our health care system
- Help facilitate our long term economic recovery

But not any health reform will do. The final legislative framework must get the fundamentals of health reform right.

We, therefore, urge you to not merge the House and Senate passed bills. Health care reform is not only about changing the rules for our health care system, it also results in restructuring one-sixth of our economy – and comes in the midst of historic economic turmoil. At no time in this long debate has it been more important than now to take a fresh look to make sure that health reform will achieve its intended goals. In our view, the most important goals that negotiators should focus on are strengthening the employment-based system, achieving meaningful reductions in the rate of growth in healthcare costs and significantly improving its quality.

Legislation that does not bend the cost curve for both public and private health plans is not accomplishing its goal and contradicts the strong bipartisan consensus that has driven the case for health care reform. Legislation limiting the flexibility and innovation in the private sector to improve health care quality would erode parts of the system that are now working.

Therefore, we strongly believe and have consistently stated that employer mandates will increase employer and employee costs and limit the flexibility and innovation that serves as the foundation of the employer-sponsored

health care system. Without this flexibility, employers will be prevented from designing and offering health plans that best reflect the needs of their workforce and make health coverage as affordable as possible for their employees.

Additionally, the final legislation must support the flexibility that ERISA provides in the offering of employer-sponsored health insurance coverage. The existing rules and regulations governing the administration of these benefit plans provide the right level of flexibility so that employers can develop the coverage that fits the changing needs of their workforce. Allowing states to require employers to comply with varying state or local mandates would further raise employer costs, stifle innovation in employer-sponsored coverage and result in unequal benefits for employees. We should not disrupt the delicate balance that ERISA's regulatory framework provides – or risk hurting those who are highly satisfied with the health care coverage that they currently receive.

Finally, we need to be sure that any legislation maintains supportive tax policy and not undermine employer-sponsored coverage or add to its costs. In particular, excise taxes on so-called "high cost" plans without adequate recognition of demographic or geographic disparities or the actuarial value of benefits, new federal premium taxes, and the taxation of retiree drug subsidies are inconsistent with making health care more affordable. Additionally, we are deeply concerned about reports of "carving-out" union negotiated plans because this merely exacerbates and concentrates the problem on all other employer-sponsored plans and the employees and families in them. We also urge that the final bill includes a clear safe harbor rule for high deductible health plan coverage so that there is no uncertainty about the ability of these important plans to continue to be offered alongside health savings accounts (HSAs). Similarly, we urge that any limits on contributions to flexible spending accounts (FSAs) be increased and then indexed to the medical component of the CPI to minimize any possible adverse impact of the limits in both bills to those with high unreimbursed medical expenses.

We do look forward to continuing to work with you on achieving responsible and practical health care reform legislation and on getting the fundamentals right for all Americans. Working together, we can achieve positive reform that bends the cost curve and expands access and quality for all Americans.

2010 Federal Fly-Back

The 2010 Federal Fly-Back will be August 19th and will again be held at the Strategic Air & Space Museum. The Lincoln Chamber again is taking the lead to organize this informative event that last year drew over 750 business leaders from Lincoln, Omaha, and across the state to hear about federal issues from our elected federal officials. More details will follow in the coming months but we are likely to follow a very similar half-day breakfast/lunch format that was so successful last year. For information about event sponsorship opportunities contact Jaime Henning at 436-2366.

LINCOLN PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regional Innovation Grant

The Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development and Greater Lincoln Workforce Investment Board hosted a meeting to release the results of a study completed by AngelouEconomics. The Greater Lincoln RIG Project is a 12-county collaborative initiative to generate opportunities for further regional economic prosperity. It identifies the economic and workforce development assets within the region and provides recommendations on a strategy to strengthen the capacity of the area education and workforce systems to meet the demands of emerging target industries.

This RIG initiative has culminated in a Strategic Action Plan that provides a roadmap for connecting, networking and leveraging important economic and workforce development assets in a 12-county southeast Nebraska region in an effort to upgrade skills of the workforce and strengthen existing companies, all while making the region more competitive for new industry opportunities.

While there are challenges to developing initiatives across twelve counties (different players, policies, politics), the region must also recognize that there are greater opportunities for widespread success. This represents a real opportunity to ensure that the region realizes its collective economic potential while creating a true best practice for others around the country.

Specific Goals and strategies were outlined in the following categories:

- Education-Enhance the pipeline of skilled workers and become a talent magnet
- Workforce Development-Better integrate economic and workforce development throughout the region
- Entrepreneurship-Expand resources and connectedness to foster entrepreneurship
- Innovation-Integrate economic development and technology transfer specifically as it pertains to Innovation Campus
- Business Retention / Attraction-Enhance efforts through regional branding, quality of life improvements and shared regional information

The Partnership will be coordinating the final strategic plan for release at the organization's annual lunch in June.

Airpark Study

The Partnership and Lincoln Airport Authority have agreed to partner on a market-based plan for the Lincoln Airpark.

The 1,000+ acre site has had several plans that outlined the land use and infrastructure. However, the two groups are now planning to take it to the next level. A site selection specialist will be identified through an RFP process to develop a market-based plan for use.

Currently, Lincoln is eliminated from a number of manufacturing project requests because of the lack of large rail-served sites. The Airpark provides a unique opportunity on several fronts. The fact that it has public ownership is a benefit on a number of projects, as is the fact that there is rail service from BNSF and tax advantages.

Eventually, the park may be fully utilized as an attraction for new jobs to the community. This would generate additional spin-off opportunities in the private sector.

Business Attraction Activity

Recent trends are pointing up in terms of requests for new projects to the community. According to Partnership numbers, there were 35 requests for information in 2009. However, there have already been 13 since December first. Additionally, the community had six sites visits in 2009 from prospects and has already had four in only the first month of 2010. The increase can be accounted for because of expectations of improvements in the capital markets and increased exposure of both the city and state through aggressive marketing campaigns in the second half of 2009.

Retention and Expansion

The Partnership has a goal of completing 100 business surveys from Nov. 1 of 2009 through March 31 2010. As of Feb. 1, the update on surveys was:

Completed as of Feb. 1 – 43

Scheduled Interviews – 25

Contacted – 27

The survey process is the cornerstone of the business retention and expansion program. Surveys allow local economic developers to identify problems or opportunities with local companies early to determine action that may need to be taken by a multitude of local and state entities. Through the program, over 5,000 jobs have been added or retained since 2004.

OPERATIONS/YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP

Young Professionals Group Areas of Focus

Communications

In January, a press release on the Convention and Visitors Bureau's record breaking number of room nights booked and their slate of events coming to Lincoln in 2010, was picked up by several local media outlets. The Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development was featured in a Lincoln Journal Star article about the Regional Innovation Grant Strategic Plan rollout. The Chamber received TV and print coverage of the 2010 Annual Meeting. Lincoln YPG's efforts as they pertain to the Lincoln Arena project were covered in the Lincoln Business Journal. Additionally Chamber policy meetings were given exposure through the Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Education Committee

YPG Annual Event – Thursday, April 29 11:30 – 1:00 p.m. the Cornhusker Marriott
Keynote Speaker for this event will be Craig L. Pearce, Ph.D., who is the Clifton Chair in Leadership and the Director of the Leadership Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has pioneered the development of shared leadership scholarship and practice. His work has appeared in top journals, is widely cited, has spawned countless doctoral dissertations across the globe, and has received widespread acclaim in the practitioner community--including a feature article in the Wall Street Journal. He has received many awards for his work including the Ascendant Scholar Award, the Asia Pacific HR Leadership Award and an award from the Center for Creative Leadership for his work on shared leadership. His book, *Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership*, is published by Sage Publications. His most recent book, *The Drucker Difference*, is published by McGraw-Hill. His forthcoming book, *Share the Lead*, will be published by Stanford University Press. He is an active keynote speaker and consultant to organizations--his clients have included such organizations as American Express, British Bakeries, the Central Intelligence Agency of the USA, Fujitsu, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Nielsen, Panda Express, Rayovac, Rover Group, and Serono, among many others.

Awards given out at the lunch will include: Young Professional of Year, Employer of Choice, 4 Under 40 and a Trailblazer award which is a state-wide recognition for a young person making an impact. Nomination forms will be posted onto the web and a call for nominations will get emailed out.

Lincoln's YPG has partnered with Leadership Resources to provide leadership development training for young professionals in Lincoln. This is a cost effective alternative to this typically expensive training, and it's available locally. This program is being provided in partnership with Leadership Resources of Lincoln. The Leadership Resources team has worked with YPG since its inception to provide strategic planning and programming. This series is a collaboration of efforts and builds on their proven formula for excellence in individual and organizational development. This four-week program has two areas of focus. There is a series for those in their early career (0-5 years) and one for those in their mid career (5-15 years).

Marketing Committee

The marketing committee is re-structuring email promotions format. Instead of sending individual emails for each event, they will be sending more consistent communications by doing a standard email every two weeks. The YP of the Month program is moving forward.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee met on Jan. 15th and developed an action plan for achieving the goals laid out in the Strategic Plan – Member Services. Our committee will work to ensure that at least 24 company presentations on YPG are given in 2010. The committee will also assist the company liaison program to get internal company YPG programming and communications in place. To help grow our membership,

we also will be reaching out to the local colleges and Universities. We have had initial discussions with the UNL Career Services offices on partnering with them to help their students better prepare for the college/career transition. We will again be hosting four Membership Orientations. The dates for orientations in 2010 will be Feb. 24 11:30-Chamber, April 1st 4:00 – NHI (before Networking Event), June 9th 7:30am-Chamber, and Sept. 14 11:30-Chamber. This year's renewal process will begin in late March and all members will be invoiced April 1st. The annual membership fee will be \$35 through May 31st. For anyone renewing after June 1st, the membership fee will be \$45. This will help to shorten the renewal season and incentivize members to renew in a more timely manner. We will be completing our membership survey in Sept. 2010. To improve our communication to our membership base we will also be rolling out a Quarterly Newsletter in March.

YP of the month

The membership committee will select the YP of the month. Anyone can nominate a YP of the month and that application is available on the website. The committee will select one member to honor per month and this individual will be interviewed as a star city six person for Strictly Business and they will also be interviewed on the morning show on KLIN for a few minutes in the month of their honoring. The honoree will also be announced at the networking event each month, and they will receive an award. The membership committee selected Adam Hayes, Smith Hayes Financial Services, as the winner of this first YP of the month and he will be honored in March.

Networking Committee

The Lincoln Children's Museum Postponed due to weather and has been rescheduled for March 3rd @ 4:30. *PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A WEDNESDAY.*

An initial discussion about strategic planning for expanding programming offerings to the membership was had that will be expanded upon at the February meeting. One idea that received wide support was the creation of a morning coffee networking series.

Philanthropy

Our "Being a Board Member" luncheon drew 50 people. Our Round Robin Board Matching Event had 8 nonprofits and 10 YPs participating resulting in 35 matches! Every nonprofit was matched with at least 3 YPs.

UPCOMING: They will again be selling annuals through Campbell's and funds will be donated to Fresh Start, a home for women transitioning out of homelessness. Marketing and sales will take place in February and March.

Entrepreneurship

This committee is assisting UNL with a Quick Pitch competition for students that will take place on Thursday, Feb. 25th at Memorial Stadium. YPG will be providing judges for this event. The January Entrepreneurship event featuring Steve Glenn and his presentation on Ten Mistakes Entrepreneurs Make was attended by 50 people and video taped by Three Pillars Media. The video has had more than 400 plays through the YPG website since the presentation. YPG will have a booth at the upcoming Summit for Entrepreneurship and is working with NUTech Ventures for a March program.

Political Voice / West Haymarket

Lincoln's YPG is working with the campaign to train young professionals in our community to give a basic presentation about the arena project and encouraging them to speak as to why they are personally supportive of the project. They will be scheduling presentations throughout Lincoln in the coming months. If you would like to schedule a presentation for your employees, please contact Stephanie Dostal, sdostal@lccoc.com.

All event & membership information can be found at www.lincolnypg.com

Chamber Services & Events

Annual Lunch

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce hosted its 140th annual meeting on Thursday, January 28, 2010, at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel. Over 700 Chamber members attended this year's sold-out event. Comments all referenced the proposed Lincoln Arena and redevelopment in the west Haymarket. Support for the initiative and a positive vote on May 11, 2010 was set forth as a challenge to the audience. Dr. Martin Regalia gave an economists view of the good, bad and the ugly as it pertains to economy heading into 2010. Video of the event is available at <http://vimeo.com/9070998>.

Face The Chamber

Wednesday, February 10

Country Club of Lincoln

12:00 Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Featuring Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler

Wednesday, March 10

Country Club of Lincoln

12:00 Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Featuring Updates on the Lincoln Arena Project

Business After Hours

Thursday, February 25

Hosted by Sun Valley Lanes

321 Victory Lane

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Sponsored by Brown Baggers

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska Lunch

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska will be hosting a lunch on Tuesday, February 16, 2010, from 12:00-1:00 pm, for businesses who would like to learn about small group health plans offered exclusively to Lincoln Chamber of Commerce members. There is no cost to attend, RSVP to Kathy Hale, 436-2385 by February 15.

SAVE THE DATE Women in Business

In cooperation with the University of Nebraska – Lincoln College of Business Administration

Tuesday, March 23

Country Club of Lincoln

7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Registration information for all events can be found at www.lcoc.com

MEMBERSHIP

Over a third of all the renewal invoices are mailed to existing members in January each year. Early indications suggest that most intend to renew as about half of the invoices issued last month have been paid. Those not yet renewed are being contacted now.

Trustee, Founder, and Pacesetter tiered member proposals have been presented during the last couple of months. All of these top investors have communicated their intent to continue their current levels of investment and sponsorship. With the exception of only a few, most invoices have been mailed.

The strength of our renewing membership should allow for some growth in the first half of 2010. We are increasing the attention given to membership at Chamber events with signage and volunteers. We are also planning an Open House for spring 2010 and expect many new prospects. Last fall, a highly attended Open House was the anchor for our Annual Membership Drive.

CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Organization

Travel packaging continues to receive interest through our website and we are currently working on 4 packages that will encourage stays in Lincoln in the next few months, with focus on getting out during the cold winter months. Packages involve bundled hotel stays with restaurant and entertainment vouchers.

Plans continue for the 2010 Special Olympics National Games in Lincoln for July 18th-23rd. Focus is currently on volunteer recruitment and also the Cessna Airlift portion of the games on the 17th and 24th. Hotel rooms continue to be booked by states that will be attending the games and also families and friends. All numbers are in line with those in Ames, IA in 2006.

Jeff attended the Southeast Nebraska Tourism Coalition (SENTC) meeting in January. This group promotes tourism in SE Nebraska and the largest portion of their membership is rural tourism opportunities in the region. For reasons of extending the stay of a visitor in Lincoln, opportunities for day trips exist in the region and future partnerships will be established with this group. As part of the RIG Report done for LPED, a portion of the report mentions an increase in the entertainment and recreational opportunities throughout the region. This group will allow this increase in activity.

Working with the Nebraska Travel Association (NETA) and Bruce Bohrer in evaluating legislation that affects tourism in Lincoln and across our state. Much of the legislation this session involves a wide variety of rural and metro interests; however, many have a fiscal note attached.

Lincoln will host the Nebraska Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau (NACVB) Meeting Planners Reception on April 18th at the Lied Center. This event is the opportunity for meeting planners in Lincoln to discover the many great facilities across our state for corporate and association meetings. The Lincoln CVB has a booth at this event and will also use this as an opportunity to thank planners for holding their events in Lincoln. Jeff is the current President of the NACVB.

Began to research nature based and arts based tourism changes to our website and publications and how that will attract new visitors to the community. Meetings with the Lincoln Arts Council and the State Department of Travel and Tourism have been productive and they will partner in delivering this message.

Sales/Marketing

The CVB issued 17 sales leads in January with the potential of 28,852 hotel room nights. A total of 6 events were booked which resulted in 24,530 room nights for Lincoln hotels with an estimated economic impact of \$7 million. Included in this booked business was a three-year contract with Sports Car Club of America through 2012. Throughout the month, the staff conducted 26 visits with clients, contacted 56 prospective organizations and reached out to 188 events which currently or previously met in Lincoln.

The Lincoln Airport Authority has signed a 3-year contract with SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) through 2012 with understanding that the 2011 Air Show will interfere with their dates. SCCA will revise their schedule to accommodate and keep their event in Lincoln that year. The CVB was instrumental in bringing this group to Lincoln in 2009 and the SCCA staff is extremely excited about their future in Lincoln!

Kara Hesser exhibited at the Religious Conference Management Association's tradeshow in Fort Worth, TX January 26-29. She met face-to-face with 26 religious meeting planners and met many others throughout the conference. Kara returned to Lincoln with 5 requests for proposals. The religious market continues to grow in size each year in Lincoln.