

**LINCOLN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CONSENT AGENDA
March 8, 2012**

PUBLIC POLICY

MARCH PUBLIC POLICY MEETINGS

- Thur. 3/1, 8:00 – 9:00 am ***Public Policy Steering Committee***
- Wed. 3/7, 8:00 – 9:00 am ***Chamber Coffee*** meeting of business, civic, and community leaders.
Sponsored by: Black Hills Energy
- Tues. 3/13, 7:00 – 8:30 am ***Business Executive Roundtable I*** meets to discuss common issues faced by business owners and develop/share best practices and solutions.
- Wed. 3/21, 8:00 – 9:00 am ***Transportation and Public Works Forum***
Featured Topic: Kevin Wailes, CEO of Lincoln Electric System, will provide a general update on issues impacting Lincoln’s public electric utility.
***Sponsored by: The Schemmer Associates
HDR, Inc.***
- Wed. 3/28, 8:00 – 9:00 am ***Public Policy Forum***
Featured Topic: Lincoln State Senators Colby Coash & Tony Fulton have been invited to review legislative issues.
Sponsored by: IMSCORP
- Tues. 2/28, 4:00 – 5:00 pm ***Business Executive Roundtable II*** meets to discuss common issues faced by business owners and develop/share best practices and approaches toward solutions.

LOCAL ISSUES:

Downtown Fiber Project

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Partnership for Economic Development has been working with members to grow the connectivity and reliability of fiber and data services in Lincoln. The Partnership commissioned a task force to address the question – “What do businesses need to retain and grow jobs in the tech and data field in Lincoln?” One of the answers to that question was the expansion of fiber capabilities in Lincoln and specifically in the downtown area. To address the need, the Partnership, the City, and the Chamber agreed to use Fast Forward Fund money to install a conduit, through which fiber optic cable could be laid, roughly from 10th to 17th, K to Q Street. The conduit could then be used by private sector companies to expand service and increase reliability. The conduit would be open to anyone. Unite Private Networks will install the conduit under an existing master agreement for services. Unite will also be the first private company to use the conduit. The project received unanimous approval from the City Council and will be done this summer in conjunction with the Downtown Street Resurfacing Project.

Downtown Resurfacing Project

This project will mill and overlay all of the downtown streets roughly from 10th to 17th, K to Q. The Lincoln Chamber has been a long-time advocate for increased road funding and maintenance. That advocacy was rewarded last year when the Mayor Beutler and the City Council agreed to increase road funding by \$7M per-year. This needed project and many others will now be possible, in part, because of the commitment of the Lincoln Chamber to road funding advocacy.

March Transportation & Public Works Forum

Lincoln Electric System CEO Kevin Wailes will be the featured speaker at the March Forum. Chamber staff has asked Kevin to address any upcoming issues facing the utility and to share his long-term vision for LES. The Wednesday forums are a great opportunity for Chamber members stay up-to-date with issues shaping Lincoln.

Local Opportunities Agenda

The new "Local Opportunities Agenda" will be up for approval by the Chamber's Board of Directors at the March meeting. Revisions to the 2011 agenda include language that outlines the Chamber's support for local infrastructure funding won in 2011, updated language regarding support the mission of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and a new section outlining the Chamber's continued support of sustaining Lincoln's momentum in the coming years. The new agenda will be available for viewing on-line following approval by the board and will also be included at the end of the monthly consent agenda.

STATE ISSUES:

2012 State Opportunities Agenda

The Lincoln Chamber Board of Directors unanimously adopted the following 2012 State Opportunities Agenda, which outlines key areas of focus for our state lobby efforts:

The Lincoln Chamber's key State policy objectives for 2012:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce will prioritize support for proposals that help facilitate the LPED strategic plan for the Lincoln region. The Lincoln Chamber will work cooperatively with the State Chamber, Omaha Chamber, the Nebraska Economic Developers Association, the University of Nebraska and other organizations and institutions to support legislative proposals and administrative changes that improve the competitive position of Nebraska.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE – The Lincoln Chamber will prioritize efforts to protect the Build NE Act and the HWY Trust Fund. The Lincoln Chamber will continue protective advocacy to secure state funds related to Lincoln's South and East Beltway projects. The Lincoln Chamber believes there is a significant funding gap for road infrastructure needs across the state. The Chamber supports a review of factors utilized in the allocation formula for distributing state road funds and will support efforts to more equitably distribute funds to areas of growing population and infrastructure needs.

STATE BUDGET & GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY – The Lincoln Chamber will prioritize budget support for our state's continued strong economic growth through funding for roads, and support for other productive expenditures that promote job and investment growth. Investments in these key assets should be maintained and even increased in areas of excellence that bolster private sector job growth. State leaders should continue to be prudent in their protection and use of the Cash Reserve Fund. The Lincoln Chamber continues to believe it is imperative for budget sustainability and taxpayer fairness that state policymakers track the actual results of CIR reforms enacted in 2011. Proper implementation to create competitive state and local governments will position Nebraska on the leading edge of sustainable economic recovery and growth.

TAX RELIEF & SPENDING RESTRAINT – The Lincoln Chamber continues to support lowering the tax burden. Nebraska has moved in the right direction recently in national tax burden rankings. Tax relief must include a focus on spending restraint and prioritization from both state and local governments. Without spending restraint from all levels of government, so

called tax relief can easily turn into a tax shift. In keeping with our core statements of policy, the Chamber supports proposals that help Nebraska become more competitive and able to expand jobs and investment to grow our economy. The Lincoln Chamber supports tax relief to help keep and attract jobs and people.

CVB MISSION SUPPORT – The Chamber will support legislative proposals that assist the Convention and Visitors Bureau in executing its mission of bringing more visitors, events, and conventions to the Lincoln area.

Revenue Forecasting Board

The February 24th meeting of the Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board held good news for Nebraskans in that the Board maintained the state's revenue projections. The Board's advisory forecast is utilized by the Legislature to craft the state's budget. At the Board's October 2011 meeting, members revised its outlook upward by about \$52M, setting state revenue projections as \$3.6B for FY2011-12 and \$3.8B for FY2012-13. The Board voted not to revise their October projections. The Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board will meet again this year on October 26th.

Legislative Session Report

State Senators will have plenty to keep them busy in March. With 17 legislative days on the March Session calendar and a very crowded list of high-priority issues still to be debated, it's likely that several of the remaining legislative days will run into the late evening.

As Senators push toward their April 12th final day, the following are a few of the issues we are working on under our 2012 State Opportunities Agenda

TAX RELIEF AND SPENDING RESTRAINT

LB 830 (Hadley et al) – Sales and Use Tax Exemption for Certain Bio-Chips

LCOC Position: Support

Jason Ball testified for LCOC, Greater Omaha Chamber, City of Lincoln, and the State Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and submitted letter of support from NEDA

Status: Advanced from Committee

LB 830 is an extremely important bill which will clarify and modernize the State of Nebraska tax treatment of certain bio-chips utilized in the production of vital information for agriculture and food safety. This is an issue for a bio-science innovator founded and still located in Lincoln. They are a world-renowned company that now is part of a larger enterprise with global reach. Nebraska's current tax treatment imposing use taxes on a major component of their process is a clear cut and pronounced competitive disadvantage for them. This is a priority bill for the Chamber of Commerce and City of Lincoln. We are very pleased that the NE Farm Bureau, NE Cattlemen, Bio Nebraska, and the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources offered their support at the public hearing, too. In addition, the Nebraska Economic Developers Association (NEDA) submitted a letter of support. This legislation has an emergency clause. *Senator Lydia Brasch selected this important legislation as her Senator Priority.*

UPDATE: Advanced to Select File on February 23rd

LB 872 (Hadley, Cornett, Mello) – Change to Market-Based Apportionment of Corporate Income for Intangibles and Services

LCOC Position: Support

Bruce Bohrer testified for LCOC and submitted a letter of support from NEDA

Status: In Committee as of 2/29/12

LB 872 is a somewhat complicated but extremely important solution on how to deal with updating current state tax policy related to sourcing of income for intangible and service companies based in NE. Nebraska's current regime for apportionment of corporate income is a direct impediment and disincentive for growth of many Nebraska-based companies selling intangibles or services. In fact, the current "cost of production" methodology

leads to an extremely untenable tax position for many Nebraska-based companies. This is an especially egregious situation because our current state tax regime negatively influences job growth decisions. LB 872 was also supported by Nebraska Global, First Data, HUDL, Nelnet, the Nebraska Economic Developers Association, Nanonation and many other companies organized under the auspices of the Nebraska Intangibles and Services Association. *Senator John Nelson selected this important legislation as his Senator Priority.*

LB 970 (Cornett, McCoy) – Tax Relief

LCOC Position: Support

Lincoln CPA John Cederberg testified for the Chamber Coalition

Chamber Coalition: Yes

Status: In Committee as of 2/29/12

LB 970 proposes to reduce three separate taxes. First, the individual state income tax would be reduced by lowering current tax rates and expanding current income brackets.

The bill would also reduce the current top corporate income tax rate from 7.81% to 6.70% which would match the proposed top individual income tax rate under the proposal. Finally, the bill proposes to repeal the inheritance tax in its entirety.

The Governor outlined the objectives of LB 970 in his State of the State address, telling state senators that “we can do better than our 29th ranking” [in Tax Foundation Business Tax Climate Rankings] and urged them to provide tax relief for hard working middle class Nebraska families and businesses. In his comments before the Revenue Committee the Governor reiterated his push for repeal of the inheritance act as a continuation of the state’s effort to complete the job of repealing “death taxes”. The Governor noted that the state’s estate tax was repealed a few years ago and the state dealt with the loss of revenue through prioritized spending and tight budgeting. “We didn’t whine or cry about it,” said Governor Heineman. “We dealt with it the way Nebraska families and businesses do – we tighten our belts and prioritized our spending.” Counties from across NE, not surprisingly, are taking exception. What might be a little surprising is that many are controlled (as in Lancaster) by Republicans who don’t appear to be near as enthusiastic to move Nebraska to a more competitive tax ranking for our business climate.

The hearing on LB 970 included opposition from several counties and county officials from across Nebraska, including Lancaster County elected officials. Lancaster County Commissioners maintain that they would be forced to raise property taxes if they can’t rely on inheritance taxes.

Our Chamber Coalition submitted a letter signed by our three Chairmen that outlined principles and objectives our coalition will adhere to as our state continues to debate ways to make our state more competitive for jobs and investment:

- 1) Nebraska’s tax policy should help advance key state strategic objectives (such as lessening the tax burden on individuals, facilitating job growth and investment, and enhancing Nebraska’s competitive position and national rankings);
- 2) Nebraska’s tax policy should be sustainable, and;
- 3) Nebraska’s tax policy should promote fairness and neutrality throughout our overall tax system.

Senator Beau McCoy LB 970 as his Senator Priority Bill.

UPDATE: The Governor’s tax relief proposal is still held in committee though it likely will be reworked and advanced with a Committee Amendment. The most forceful opposition to tax relief has come from County officials statewide who have objected to the inheritance tax cut, and social welfare advocates who have maintained the income tax cuts will undercut programs meant to assist the working poor.

CVB MISSION SUPPORT

LB 859 (Avery) Provide State Appropriation for Centennial Mall Renovation

LCOC Position: Support

Bruce Bohrer testified at the hearing

Status: See update below.

LB 859 will provide a \$1.2M state general fund appropriation to assist with the much needed renovation of the Centennial Mall. The state funds would be utilized for safety features of the renovation. The Chamber views this bill as a worthy use of state funds; the state has a responsibility to financially participate in the renovation of the Mall. It is the doorway to the Capitol and a gathering place to thousands of school children from across Nebraska as well as visitors from all across the country.

UPDATE: Preliminary Appropriations Committee recommendations provide \$800,000 in state financial participation for the Centennial Mall renovation project.

LB 889 (Avery, Campbell, Coash, Fulton, Haar, McGill, Wallman) Change Rules of Competition for Taxi-cab Service

LCOC Position: Support

Bruce Bohrer testified for LCOC

Status: In Committee as of 2/29/12

LB 889 will exempt the requirements for “public convenience and necessity” for the provision of taxi services in primary and metropolitan class cities. The Lincoln Chamber added our voice of support and concern over the lack of competition and inadequate service currently provided in Lincoln. The inadequacy of the service is a public safety concern of bar owners and the city council Internal Liquor Committee. The Chamber and CVB also share these concerns. This issue needs a solution either through legislative action on LB 889 or approval of expanded options through the Public Service Commission. Lincoln Senator Bill Avery is leading this effort but it is noteworthy that fellow Lincoln Senators Amanda McGill, Ken Haar, Tony Fulton, Colby Coash, and Kathy Campbell have signed as co-sponsors on LB 889.

UPDATE: LB 889 is being held in Committee pending the outcome of the Public Service Commission hearings on applications for expanded Lincoln taxi service.

LB 903 (Cornett, ET AL) Exempt Certain Youth Sports Admissions from Sales and Use Taxes

LCOC Position: Support with Letter

Public Hearing: February 1st

Status: In Committee as of 2/29/12

Fulton AM 2132 was amended to LB 727, which makes the Youth Sports exemption part of LB 727. LB 727 is on Select File.

The bill redefines admissions in the sales and use tax statute to exempt certain youth sports activities and fees associated with these activities. LB 903 is a response to a Department of Revenue ruling in the late fall that changed what had been the status quo of exempting these admission to youth sports activities organized by non-profits such as the YMCA and the Nebraska Sports Council. We have numerous events in Lincoln, and statewide events largely held in Lincoln, that would be impacted by this. LB 903 should be enacted to restore the playing field so to speak for these youth activities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LB 971 (Harms) Merge Department of Labor into the Department of Economic Development

LCOC Position: Bruce Bohrer testified in a neutral capacity at the public hearing on behalf the Lincoln Chamber, Greater Omaha Chamber and NE Chamber. Our Chamber Coalition supports the concept of merger for greater coordination and collaboration but have questions/ concerns about how the merger will impact economic development operations/advocacy.

Status: Advanced to General File with Committee Amendment AM1970

LB 971 would begin the process of merging the Nebraska Department of Labor (DOL) with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED), bringing both agencies under one director. According to the Statement of Intent, this merger is based on the recognition that economic success in Nebraska is dependent on businesses, and that businesses rely on a talented, well-equipped workforce. Proponents, including the Governor, say the merger will facilitate a coordinated approach to workforce and economic development. LB971 moves all existing programs, employees, contracts, and services from DOL into DED. The bill does not call for any cuts of current employees or services. The focus of this bill is effective and efficient delivery of

services to Nebraska citizens through greater coordination and collaboration in carrying out the State's workforce and economic development efforts.

This is another bill we are working on through the Chamber Coalition to develop a united response on this proposal. Toward that end, the Lincoln Chamber submitted the following:

Chamber Coalition Principles for DOL/DED Reorganization

- Must ensure statewide economic development continues as a high-priority objective and is not subverted to programs within DOL;
- Must include Deputy Director position with exclusive duties related to economic development as part of the reorganization;
- Statewide tourism promotion must be continued as a high-priority objective;
- Include a built-in statewide review of outcomes, which shall include specific examples of how the merger helped create better coordination

and synergy between the previously separate agencies and future review and assessment of how the merger, in practice, helped or hindered the objectives of the agencies;

- Include mandatory legislative review of reorganization at specified future date;
- Greater flexibility in new agency workforce (more exempt positions)

An amendment offered at the public hearing by co-sponsor Senator Heath Mello of Omaha addressed many of the issues above. The Government Committee took some of his concepts and reworked them into the Committee Amendment.

UPDATE: LB 971 is a Government Committee Priority Bill. This bill may be pulled from the agenda in favor of an Interim Study. The Governor has indicated he will continue to move forward with the merger.

LB 983 (Cornett) Remove Limitation on R & D Tax Credits

LCOC Position: Support,

Chamber Coalition: YES

Public Hearing: February 1st

Status: Advanced to Select File w/ Amendment AM2096

LB 983 would strike the limitation on the number of years that a taxpayer can claim the research & development (R&D) tax credits. Current NE law includes an R&D tax credit to university-based R&D projects (that credit is equal to 35 percent of the federal R&D income tax credit) and another applies to R&D projects that are not university-based projects (that credit is equal to 15 percent of the federal R&D income tax credit). Current Nebraska law limits the term of a taxpayer's ability to claim to a total of five tax years.

The Nebraska R&D tax credits is unique in that it is a refundable tax credit, which can be paid to a taxpayer (such as a start-up) without an income tax liability. The changes proposed by LB 983 would be operative for all taxable years beginning or deemed

to begin on or after January 1, 2012, under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

UPDATE: The Committee Amendment, AM 2096, would allow the research & development tax credit to be carried forward 20 years (rather than 4 years under current law). The proposed 20-year carry forward is consistent with the 20-year carry forward period allowed under federal law for the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 41 R&D income tax credit. (Since the IRC section 41 R&D credit is one of the

many "General Business Credits" under IRC section 38, its carry forward period is 20 years as provided for by IRC section 39.)

Senator Heath Mello selected LB 983 as his Senator Priority Bill and this important legislation was debated early in March.

Build a Healthier Nebraska Initiative – University of Nebraska

LB 1055 (Hadley) Funds for UNK Nursing and Allied Health Facility

LB 1065 (Fulton) Funds for Lincoln Division of UNMC College of Nursing

LB 1066 (Hansen) Planning Funds for Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

LB 1089 (Nelson) Funds for UNMC Cancer Research and Treatment Facility

LCOC Position: Support

Chamber Coalition: Yes

Public Hearing: February 2nd

Status: In Committee as of 2/2/12

This package of bills represents leveraging some of the most competitive and cutting-edge University programs in cancer research and treatment, health care workforce development, and animal science. These initiatives ask for just over \$91M in funds from the state's cash reserve and will leverage over \$300M in private investment and other fund sources.

The Chamber Coalition of the Lincoln, Omaha and State Chambers of Commerce submitted a "Chairs Letter" in support of this package, noting in the letter that

"From a business perspective, the University of Nebraska is well known as a key component of our current and future prospects for high-impact economic growth. The package of bills that you will be hearing today represents key investments and funding for what we view as productive public investments. We believe the statewide aspect, as well as the public/private collaborations and investments involved in each of these proposals, makes them uniquely important to the future economic health of our state.

The proposals are very important to sustain the current statewide success the University has achieved in these key strategic areas for our state's long-term growth."

UPDATE: The preliminary recommendation from the Legislature's Appropriations Committee is to put \$71M next year toward funding University of Nebraska projects. The state's cash reserve will provide \$65M. The committee recommended only the Kearney nursing project receive money next year. However, under the Appropriations Committee Recommendations, the state would contribute \$50M over 10 years for the a Veterinary Diagnostics Center on UNL's East Campus, with about \$6M in general funds committed in 2012/-13 for the initial bond payments.

Significant fundraising and private sector financial participation is part of the plan. Private dollars would be raised before state funds could be released. \$5M in private funds would need to be raised for the Veterinary Diagnostics Center; \$3M in private funds will be required to for the \$18M nursing and allied health project in Kearney; \$75M in private funds would be raised for the UNMC Cancer Research and Treatment project in Omaha, which would leverage \$50M in state funds.

The full Legislature also will debate the Appropriations Committee funding recommendations, with budget debates projected to begin the second week of March.

[LB 1080](#) (Cornett) Provide a property tax exemption and a sales and use tax exemption relating to data centers

LCOC Position: Support

Chamber Coalition: Yes

Status: In Committee as of 2/29/12

This legislative bill relates to data centers and exempts sales and use taxes on tangible personal property (e.g. components and parts) 'shipped to' and 'assembled in' Nebraska, but following assembly, shipped outside the state to be placed in to service at a physical location outside Nebraska. The bill also clarifies that such temporary property is exempt from personal property tax.

UPDATE: Senator Scott Price selected this as his Senator Priority Bill.

ROAD FUNDING

[LB 1098](#) (Council) Repeal the Build Nebraska Act and redirect sales tax revenues

LCOC Position: Oppose

Public Hearing: February 16th

Status: In Committee

LB 1098 is a continuation of the effort to fight against needed prioritization of funding for statewide road needs. The Department of Roads already has put together a list of projects it will bring on line over the next ten years with the \$600M+ provided by the Build Nebraska Act. This includes building the Lincoln South Beltway as part of the state expressway system. The Lincoln Chamber will be among the many road funding advocates who will fight against LB 1098.

March 28th Public Policy Forum

We've invited Senator Colby Coash and Senator Tony Fulton to discuss legislative issues. Senator Coash is a member of the General Affairs, Urban Affairs and Judiciary Committees. Senator Fulton is a member of the Appropriation Committee. This meeting will occur as the Legislature is heading into its final ten days, so plan now to attend this very informative forum.

FEDERAL ISSUES:

Though we have seen some movement recently on a few federal issues, such as Congress again taking up the issue of a long-term HWY funding bill, we remain a little bit skeptical of the ability of Congress to find consensus. With the national elections pending, political grandstanding will unfortunately get in the way. The Lincoln Chamber will continue to work on federal issues, such as funding for roads and concerns over the anti-business actions of the National Labor Relations Board, through our involvement in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Payroll Tax Holiday

Congress passed the extension of the 2% payroll tax holiday on February 17th. Emergency unemployment benefits also were approved for the remainder of 2012, and the \$152B measure prevents Medicare funding formula changes that would have slashed payments to doctors by about a third. The \$100B cost of the payroll tax holiday will be added to the deficit, while the so-called "doc fix" and the unemployment benefit extension are funded by small cuts in federal pension benefits, selling public spectrum for broadcasting, and making cuts to health care programs.

Senator Nelson Information

For a review of federal issues Senator Nelson is working on and a review of his positions, podcasts, video clips, statements, etc, go to:

[Ben Nelson, U.S. Senator for Nebraska: Press](#)

Senator Johanns Information

For a review of federal issues Senator Johanns is working on and a review of his positions, podcasts, video clips, statements, etc, go to:

[News Room - U.S. Senator Mike Johanns for the State of Nebraska](#)

Representative Fortenberry Information

For a review of federal issues Rep. Fortenberry is working on and a review of his positions, podcasts, video clips, statements, etc, go to:

[Press Releases | Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, Representing the 1st District of Nebraska](#)

FEDERAL FLY-BACK

Plans are underway for another Federal Fly-Back in mid-August. Stay tuned for more information as we develop our program. Likely issues to be more fully vetted include the federal HWY Bill, Farm Bill, and Federal Debt/Deficit Issues.

LINCOLN PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Quick Pitch – The Partnership for Economic Development sponsored the 3rd Annual 3-2-1 Quick Pitch Competition on Feb. 23. The competition is held by the UNL Center for Entrepreneurship, the Southeast Community College Entrepreneurship Center and the Lincoln Public Schools Focus Program. The event is held each year in the box seats at Memorial Stadium. There were six rooms of competitors: one high school, one two-year degree, and four four-year degree. Each student is given five minutes to pitch a business concept, followed by two minutes for questions from the judges. Winners received \$1,000 to develop the business concept. Jason Smith and Jason Ball from the Partnership participated as judges for the event. The Partnership sponsored the prize for one of the four-year degree competitions.

Entrepreneurship Summit – The Partnership for Economic Development participated in the organizing of the 2012 Nebraska Entrepreneurship Summit held at the La Vista Embassy Suites on Feb. 24. The daylong event featured keynote speakers Christian Renaud, Mary Ann O'Brien and Steve Kiene of Nebraska Global as well as three tracks of breakout sessions featuring more than 20 Nebraska business owners. This is the sixth year the event has been held and reached a new record for attendance at more than 560 people. Jason Ball was the moderator of the afternoon product demonstration session.

Business Retention & Expansion Surveys – The Partnership staff along with representatives of Lincoln Electric System, the City of Lincoln, Black Hills Energy and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development are in full swing in completing the 2012 business retention and expansion survey effort. To date, the partners have completed roughly 60 surveys. The target is to complete 100 by the end of April with the annual Business Conditions Report scheduled to be released at the annual breakfast in June.

Marketing Plan – The Partnership is preparing for significant community marketing opportunities throughout the Spring. The goal of the 2012 marketing campaign is to focus on industries that enhance community targets including food, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and information technology and to market cooperative with state and local partners. The events for the spring of 2012 include:

- IAMC Spring Forum – The largest industrial real estate organization in the U.S.
- IFT Food Expo – In support of the UNL Food Processing Center, the Partnership will attend the largest food technology show in the U.S.
- BIO International – The Partnership will once again attend the largest International Bio conference held annually. Bio Nebraska will lead the state's contingent at the event.
- Plastic NPE – The Partnership will be working with Nebraska Public Power District on this plastics show held once every three years.
- IMN Data Center Show – The Partnership will attend this event with the State of Nebraska.

Foreign Trade Zone – The Lincoln Foreign Trade Zone is close to getting its fourth tenant, the third in the last two years with Novartis joining the zone this Spring. The Lincoln Chamber Economic Development Corp. is the grantee for the zone from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Companies in a Foreign Trade Zone get certain benefits through importing and exporting on duties. The Partnership will be hosting a Foreign Trade Zone expert March 9 who will be available to meet with companies interested in either a usage-driven site or a subzone for manufacturing, distribution or warehousing. For more information, contact Jason Smith at 402.436.2373.

Building and Site Data Base -- The Partnership is working with the City of Lincoln and Realtors Association of Lincoln to complete a “facelift” of the community’s building and site database. The group will be working with Location One for the site and expects the new site to be launched by April.

Digital Media – Investors, members and other interested parties may keep up with the most recent happenings through the Partnership either at the website, www.selectlincoln.org or at twitter, @selectlincoln. All Partnership staff are now posting at twitter.

Next Key Dates

LCEDC Board Meeting – March 13, 2012 at 8 a.m.

OPERATIONS/YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP

Chamber Events :

Thursday, March 1 | 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

YPG Netquirting

Down the Hatch | 5601 Northwest 1st Street

Wednesday, March 7 | 8:00 a.m.

Chamber Coffee

Lincoln Chamber of Commerce | 1135 M Street

Wednesday, March 7 | 12:00 noon

Ambassador Lunch

Lincoln Chamber of Commerce | 1135 M Street

Friday, March 9 | 7:30 a.m.

Small Business Network

Tiger Rock | 5900 South 85th Street

Wednesday, March 14 | 12:00 p.m.

Face the Chamber

Lincoln Country Club | 3200 S. 24th

Thursday, March 15 | 8:30-1 p.m.

Women In Business Conference

Country Club of Lincoln | 3200 South 24th Street

Wednesday, March 21 | 7:30-8:30 a.m.

YPG Netperking

Blue Blood Brewery | 500 W South Street

Wednesday, March 21 | 8:00 a.m.

Transportation and Public Works

Lincoln Chamber of Commerce | 1135 M Street

Thursday, March 22 | 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Business After Hours
Nebraska Champions Club | 707 Stadium Dr.

Wednesday, March 28 | 8:00 a.m.
Public Policy
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce | 1135 M Street

Wednesday, March 28 | 12:00-1:00 p.m.
YPG lunch- WRK's area around the arena
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce | 1135 M Street

Chamber Communications & Marketing Activities

Upcoming Event and Program Promotions:

Face the Chamber

Business After Hours

Women in Business

YPG Annual Awards Swellebration

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

Lincoln's Specialty Care

The Physicians Directory has been printed and copies are available for \$10. Health news and an interactive database are available online at www.LincolnDocs.com. The directory is produced jointly with Lancaster County Medical Center and with help from all major hospitals and investors of the program.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership grew slightly from January to February. Several more non-renewals were processed in the early months of this year than last, but recruitment during the period was higher. The total number of Lincoln Chamber of Commerce members is now 1,546. Those joining in early 2012 include locally owned retail and service providers, commercial construction companies, insurance agencies, national retailers and a regional division office. This is a great mix of new members.

For a complete membership listing, please follow this link to our website:

<http://www.lcoc.com/membership/results?keywords=&e4532=&btn=Search>

The first membership drive for 2012 is March 1. The 5th Annual Lincoln Chamber Employee Drive leverages the relationships staff has as individuals within the community. Placing membership responsibilities into the hands of the entire staff insures that we understand the needs and expectations of our members. This ongoing conversation allows us to collect feedback directly from those who invest in our organization. Please join this public conversation about the success of the Lincoln Chamber by sharing your story within the business community.

CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Organization

To follow-up from last month, the 2012 Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) will be holding their 8-team 2012 GPAC Baseball Championship Tournament in Lincoln, Nebraska, at Haymarket Park and Sherman Field.

The 2012 tournament is May 3-5. Our staff met with GPAC and Wesleyan officials to discuss logistics as well as getting the word out to baseball organizations in Lincoln to come out and support this event.

Jeff met with staff of the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center in Denton to discuss tour packages for the upcoming season and organizations that could be utilize this attraction in Lancaster County. Please take some time this summer to see this and many of our other great attractions!

Planning is underway for the 2012 Celebrate Lincoln event, June 8th and 9th. Event organizers have done a great job of lining up great musical acts on both nights. The CVB will work to package hotel deals with other Lincoln events to encourage visitors to extend their stay in Lincoln this summer.

Various staff presented during a couple of lunch presentations at the CVB in February. The Lincoln Young Professionals Group learned about what it takes to recruit events to Lincoln and the Lincoln area attractions and museum's gathered for an event which further defined the impact that the group tour market has on Lincoln. Both events encouraged individuals to think of Lincoln as a destination for vacation travel and conventions.

Jeff presented to 75 students in a Hospitality and Tourism class at UNL. This class encourages students to consider a career in tourism, but is also provides students the opportunity to hear about all of the exciting projects in Lincoln. These opportunities provide for future career opportunities as they consider life after graduation.

Staff is busy preparing for the upcoming Boys and Girls State High School Championships the first two weeks of March. The Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau along with Pershing Center have teamed up to offer a free shuttle service to tournament spectators. The free shuttle will operate every 10 minutes running between the Haymarket Garage and Pershing Center. Other garages will offer discounted parking as well. Other services provided by the CVB during this event include information tables at all sites, as well as the popular pizza feed event for teams and their coaches. Visitor information is also mailed to schools containing information on construction, traffic changes, parking, overnight accommodations, events calendar and other services available during their visit to Lincoln.

As part of the Mayors International Friendship Committee, staff of the CVB, LPED and LCOC presented brief overviews to visitors from six countries. Great questions in regards to tourism impact, as well as the volume of international visitors to Lincoln. It was enjoyable to help them plan their upcoming weekend of must-see activities in Lincoln.

Sales/Marketing

In the month of February, the CVB sales staff issued 11 sales leads to its shareholders with the potential of 5,625 hotel room nights. In total, 7 events were booked for the month which resulted in 1,210 hotel room nights for an estimated economic impact of \$346,060. Throughout the month, the staff conducted 8 visits with clients, contacted 12 prospective organizations and reached out to 154 events which currently or previously met in Lincoln. Services were provided to 14 organizations hosting their events in the Lincoln community



2012 Local Opportunities Agenda

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce will continue its critical role as the primary business advocate for our community's continued growth. We will be focused, issue-based, and non-partisan while asserting the positive and essential role business plays in improving our community and expanding opportunities for all citizens.

The Lincoln Chamber's key Local policy objectives for 2012:

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE - The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce will continue to prioritize efforts to close Lincoln's infrastructure funding gap. The Lincoln Chamber strongly supports efforts to direct the growth dividend, identified by the University of Nebraska's Bureau of Business Research, to fund projects that will expand our local tax base. Critical infrastructure is one of the most pressing issues facing Lincoln. The Chamber will also continue to monitor and defend the \$7M in additional road funding appropriated in 2011 through increases in the Wheel Tax and rightful changes made to the way Lincoln funds its snow removal budget. The Chamber will be vigilant to ensure the Mayor's Fast Forward Fund is utilized for local infrastructure needs related to economic development projects. We will continue to work cooperatively with other groups and associations to find solutions that increase funding for needed infrastructure investments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - The Lincoln Chamber actively supports local initiatives designed to facilitate the LPED strategic economic development plans for the Lincoln metro region. The Lincoln Chamber commits to collaborating with the University of Nebraska, the 2015 Vision group, and other institutions and organizations to improve Lincoln's competitiveness. We will continue to reach out and work with our community's elected officials and governmental staff who share this commitment, with the ultimate goal of making Lincoln a renowned destination city for building a business, pursuing a career, and being entrepreneurial.

TAX ALLOCATION & GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY - The Lincoln Chamber reaffirms our stance that each local governmental body should have a general goal to not increase property tax reliance more than the rate of inflation. The Lincoln Chamber recognizes the need for a community-wide discussion regarding the allocation of our existing total property tax levy. Currently, the City of Lincoln receives only 14% of property taxes paid by residents. The community must decide if the current allocation is sustainable and fits with our community's long-range plan.

CVB MISSION SUPPORT - The Lincoln Chamber commits its support to local efforts that assist the Convention and Visitors Bureau in executing its mission. Those efforts include, but are not limited to, ensuring all visitor attractions are adequate and their capital needs are being met by the community.

SUSTAINING LINCOLN'S MOMENTUM - The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce is committed to moving Lincoln forward. To that end, the Lincoln Chamber will continue to advocate for the Pinnacle Bank Arena and the associated development of the West Haymarket area, the re-development of Air Park and the development of the Air Park Rail Center, and the development of the University of Nebraska's Innovation Campus. These projects represent the future of both Lincoln and the State of Nebraska.

Approved by Board of Directors: March 8, 2012