

THE EXECUTIVE

THE STATE CHAMBER 
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry
May/June 2010

State Chamber Goes To Washington

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry's annual fly-in to Washington, D.C. was held May 4-5. More than 30 State Chamber members participated in the event, which included issue briefings at the headquarters of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Topics included the new health care law, the "card check" bill and other labor-related

legislation, cap and trade, financial regulation, and other proposals that would impact Nebraska's business community and economy.

Other highlights from this year's D.C. fly-in included the annual State Chamber Congressional Luncheon sponsored by Nebraska Public Power District. The luncheon afforded State Chamber members the opportunity to hear from and speak directly to all five

members of Nebraska's congressional delegation and meet their senior staff. Participants also were treated to an evening reception at the Washington offices of Husch Blackwell Sanders, LLP. In addition, several attendees took part in the traditional Nebraska Breakfast, held Wednesday mornings on Capitol Hill, and visited the individual congressional offices. ■

(Photo montage on page 3.)

Nebraska Advantage Modernization Bill Signed

Late in the 2010 legislative session, Governor Dave Heineman signed LB918, one of the key economic development bills of the 2010 legislative session. Introduced by Senator Galen Hadley of Kearney, the new law modernizes the five-year-old Nebraska Advantage Act and two-year-old Super Advantage Act.

LB918 makes three notable changes: 1.) It allows tax incentives for business that make software, data and information available by Internet – not just on computer disc; 2.) It adds data centers to the list of qualified activities and permits smaller data centers to qualify for incentives; and 3.) It amends the Nebraska Super Advantage Act to

ensure that "wages paid" includes employee benefits, such as retirement contributions made by the employer – a change experts say will help communi-

ties attract higher paying jobs. The State Chamber strongly supported LB918 and worked to ensure its passage. ■



Governor Dave Heineman signs LB918 into law as the legislative session draws to a close. Also pictured are State Chamber Chairman Richard Reiser of Omaha and State Chamber President Barry Kennedy, along with Nebraska Economic Development Director Richard Baier, Senator Hadley and Senator Heath Mello of Omaha, a key co-sponsor.

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry
PO Box 95128, Lincoln, NE 68509-5128
Tel: (402) 474-4422 Fax: (402) 474-5681
<http://www.nechamber.com>
nechamber@nechamber.com
Editor: Jamie Karl



State Chamber Views...
Guest Editorial by Richard S. Reiser
Chairman of the Board
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry

"Thoughts On The State Chamber's D.C. Visit"

On May 4 and 5, more than thirty State Chamber members participated in the annual Washington, D.C. fly-in. We met with policy experts from the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for issue briefings. These are the individuals who are working the significant federal issues that impact our businesses on a daily basis. We were impressed with their depth of knowledge on business issues.

Among other topics, the following were discussed at length:

- Implementation of the new health care law;
- The cap-and-trade climate change bill;
- The financial reform and regulation bill; and
- The "card check" bill supported by labor union leaders.

While space does not permit a detailed summary of the many issues discussed, State Chamber members should recognize that the business community must remain constantly vigilant and be aware of what is taking place in our nation's capital.

The D.C. fly-in also included the traditional Nebraska Breakfast, a longstanding tradition in which our senators and congressmen appear in a relaxed setting to offer their perspectives on the issues affecting our state. Later that day, the State Chamber hosted a luncheon on Capitol Hill for all five members of the state's congressional delegation and their senior staff members. This provided an excellent opportunity for State Chamber members to have one-on-one discussions with our senators and congressmen.

We are fortunate to live in a state in which our elected representatives make themselves available and are willing to discuss important business-related

issues. That kind of relationship does not exist in all states. While we do not always agree on every issue, the open dialogue is important and makes trips like the D.C. fly-in so important.

I also want to note that all members of Nebraska's federal delegation have been recognized by the U.S. Chamber and the National Association of Manufacturers for their pro-business votes on significant issues. Once again, few other states can make the same claim.

It has never been easy to be in business. But sometimes, it seems to just get harder every day. Take comfort in knowing that your State Chamber staff is ever vigilant and serves as a well-respected source of information for our elected officials at both the state and national levels. Through our association with the U.S. Chamber and NAM, the State Chamber influences policy and regulations – to help ensure that both are formed with the best interests of business and commerce in mind.

From what we learned on our visit to the nation's capital, the next few years will bring continued challenges for America's business community. Our economy and our tradition of free enterprise will be further tested. Now is the time for America's elected leaders to be part of the solution by encouraging the business community to grow, invest and prosper here at home. Bigger government is not the answer to rebuilding the economy. That is the job of individuals and the private sector, which can and will restore confidence in entrepreneurship and the American Dream.

The State Chamber will continue to work hard to educate our elected representatives in Washington and Lincoln on steps they can take to ensure that America and Nebraska keep moving forward. ■

2010 Legislative Session Concludes

The second session of the 101st Legislature adjourned *sine die* on April 14. A total of 429 bills and constitutional amendments were introduced this session, and many of last year's 681 bills were also considered in 2010 as carryover legislation. In total, your State Chamber monitored or had positions on more than 225 of the measures due to their potential impact on business.

This year's 60-day session brought numerous actions on a wide range of issues. Perhaps the most notable development came with the passage and signing of a State Chamber-supported bill (LB918) to update the Nebraska Advantage and Super Advantage. In addition, other important legislation affecting the business community was approved and signed into law, including a bill (LB1020) making Nebraska eligible for approximately \$43 million in federal funding to boost the state's unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund. The change should help stabilize UI funding and prevent the kind of steep tax increases experienced by employers this year.

Other important bills approved include a proposal to provide new tourism and urban redevelopment incentives at the local level (LB1018) and a bill to encourage the construction of privately-owned wind farms in Nebraska (LB1048). Several bills of concern were defeated this session, including legislation that would have weakened Nebraska's employment-at-will doctrine (LB107) and drastically expanded the number of services that are subject to sales tax (LB1066).

One bill opposed by the State Chamber (LB780) was passed and signed into law. LB780 expands workers' compensation (WC) coverage to include mental injuries incurred by first responders. While the change does not impact WC rules for private sector employees, the State Chamber will closely monitor the implementation of this law and its cost to Nebraska taxpayers. ■



D.C. Fly-In 2010



(Clockwise from top) Participants of the State Chamber's D.C. fly-in gather outside the headquarters of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, where they were briefed on key federal legislation pending in Congress.

Senator Ben Nelson addresses the State Chamber's Congressional Luncheon held on May 5.

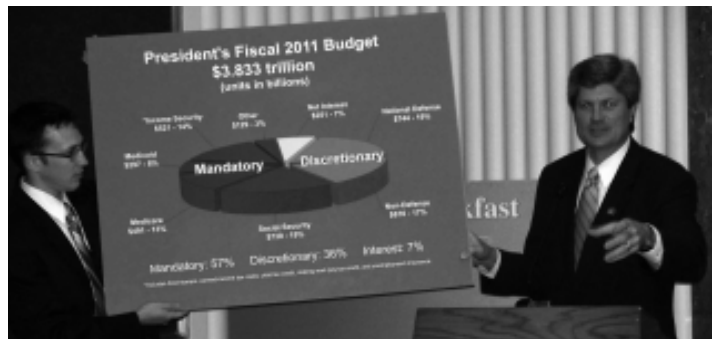
Nebraska's Second District Congressman Lee Terry joins State Chamber members during their May 4 dinner in downtown Washington. Pictured along with Congressman Terry are Galen Ullstrom of Omaha and Don Heimes of Columbus.



Nebraska's First District Congressman Jeff Fortenberry explains the federal budget at the Nebraska Breakfast.

Fly-in participants meet with Third District Congressman Adrian Smith.

Senator Mike Johanns meets with State Chamber President Barry Kennedy, Chairman Richard Reiser of Omaha, District Director Chris Roth of Deshler, and Chairman-Elect Jeff Scherer of Snyder.



Snyder Industries Honored With Manufacturing Award

Snyder Industries, Inc. of Lincoln is the recipient of the 2010 Innovation in Manufacturing Award for Nebraska. The company was honored in late April at the annual meeting of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry's Manufacturers Council. The award is sponsored by the State Chamber and RSM McGladrey, a leading provider of accounting, tax and business consulting services to the manufacturing and wholesale distribution industry.

The Innovation in Manufacturing Award recognizes Nebraska manufacturers who successfully implement new ways of conducting business through the use of products, processes, technologies and strategies. Snyder Industries has developed a method for recycling plastic waste from its bulk container molding process. This new waste management solution has reduced costs for the company, created additional jobs and increased Snyder's competitiveness in the marketplace.

"It is an honor to recognize Snyder Industries with this award," said Barry Kennedy, president of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry. "Their spirit of innovation gives us another reason to be proud of our manufacturing sector in Nebraska, and it illustrates why manufacturers are helping pave the way to economic recovery." ■



Valmont Industry Senior Vice President Bob Meaney, chairman of the State Chamber's Manufacturers Council, and Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman present the 2010 Innovation in Manufacturing Award to Thomas O'Connell, president of Snyder Industries of Lincoln.

State Chamber Welcomes New Investors

Membership in the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry is an investment in Nebraska's economic well-being. This month, the State Chamber welcomes the following new members. We encourage you to consider doing business with fellow Chamber members.

BEATRICE

Store Kraft Manufacturing Co.

Katie Humble

COLUMBUS

Mueller & Schoepf Drywall, Inc.

Ronnie Mueller

DENVER, CO

COPIC Insurance Co.
Beverly Razon

GRAND ISLAND

Tom Dinsdale Automotive Group

Tom Dinsdale

Recommended by Brian Hamilton, Beardmore Chevrolet, Inc.

KEARNEY

Killion Motors, Inc.
Loren Killion

LINCOLN

Amigos/Kings Classic
Jan Moore

Mines & Associates, LLC

Mick Mines

Woods & Aitken, LLP

Bruce A. Smith

Recommended by Chris Roth, Reinke Manufacturing Co., Inc.

NEBRASKA CITY

Brust Equipment Co.
John L. Brust

OMAHA

Fuchs Machinery, Inc.
Tom Berger

Millennium Capital

Advisors, LLC

Mark Lakers

OPUS Medication Systems

Mark G. Keffeler

Security National Bank

Jim Landen

Recommended by Dale Funk, Lumbermen's Brick & Supply Co.

Wick's Truck Trailers, Inc.

Gale Wickersham

PERU

Peru State College

Daniel Hanson, Ph.D.

PLATTSMOUTH

Cass County Bank

Douglas Duey

RAVENNA

Town & Country Bank

Dale Johnson

SEWARD

Tenneco, Inc.

Ken Bohuslavsky

ST. PAUL

St. Paul Development

Corp.

Mike Feeken

WAYNE

Arnie's Ford-Mercury, Inc.

Bill Reeg

WICHITA, KS

Koch Companies Public Sector, LLC

Mark A. Nichols

WISNER

Wisner Chamber of Commerce

Todd Wuestewald

Recommended by Jeff Scherer, Smeal Fire Apparatus Co.

WOODBINE, IA

Midwest Retro Foam, Inc.

Eric Moores

YORK

York Equipment, Inc.

Steve Ermer