

MAEDC E-NEWS MARCH 2010

Contact: Patty Wood, Director of Marketing & PR, Nebraska Dept. of Economic Development, www.neded.org, patty.wood@nebraskas.gov, 402-471-1559

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

Nebraska Provides Certainty in Uncertain Economic Times

Tough economic times haven't deterred the Nebraska Department of Economic Development from moving toward its goals and objectives with confidence and certainty, while continuing to achieve an impressive rate of success.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) is the official lead economic development agency for Nebraska. Created by the Legislature in 1967, DED's emphasis is growing and diversifying the state's "economic base," bringing new dollars into the state.

With its mission to provide quality leadership and services that enable Nebraska communities, businesses, and people to succeed in a global economy, the Department stands equipped and ready to help businesses and communities develop and capitalize on economic development opportunities.

The Department's Business Development, Community and Rural Development and Travel and Tourism Divisions, coupled with its Administrative area accomplish this work with employees in the Lincoln home office or field offices strategically located throughout western, central and eastern Nebraska.

Highlights of Key Industry Clusters:

The Department launched a new initiative in 2009 to help Aurora, Kearney, and South Sioux City develop power park sites ready for data center and other high-tech business opportunities. These were initiated in part by Yahoo!'s decision to develop two projects in Nebraska, bringing along many high paying jobs. The State is attractive to high-end power users due to power rates that are among some of the lowest in the nation, which helps companies maintain lower operating costs. Nebraska also offers a safe, secure location and a highly skilled labor force suitable for companies operating data centers and manufacturing advanced or renewable energy products.

A wind supply chain workshop jointly held in early February by partners DED, Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Omaha Public Power District, and Nebraska Public Power District at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln attracted upward of 110 people. There were representatives of Nebraska-based and out of state companies, community colleges and the university, and economic development organizations statewide—all excited to hear speakers from the Great Lakes Wind Network (GLWN) talk about the tremendous growth and expansion opportunities in this industry. GLWN is a liaison between large wind turbine assemblers and companies interested in supplying components to the industry. Due to the large number of components that comprise a wind turbine, Nebraska is well positioned to offer key locations for such manufacturing

facilities. For example, Brian Turner with Distefano Tool and Mfg., in Omaha, shared how his company is currently working with a large wind turbine assembler to supply various components that are expected to net the company millions of dollars and new jobs during the next couple years.

Other key targeted industries for the state include Insurance and Financial Services; Information Technology; Bioscience and Technology; Renewable Energy, including Biofuels, Solar and Geothermal; Transportation, Warehousing, Distribution, and Logistics; Advanced Manufacturing and Value-added Agriculture; and Defense.

Nebraska 2009 successes highlighted in these industries include:

Yahoo! brought two projects—data center in La Vista and a customer care center in Omaha

Specialty Protein Producers—soybean extraction plant, South Sioux City

Novozymes Blair, Inc.—enzyme manufacturing facility, Blair

Intersystems Inc.—manufacturing facility, Omaha

PayFlex Systems USA, Inc.—national headquarters, Omaha

Alegent Health and CoSentry—joint data storage center, Omaha

Cabela's Inc.—data center and technology development center, Papillion

Vireo Resources—nutriceutical manufacturing facility, Plattsmouth

Cargill—office space near its biorefinery, Blair

Buckle, Inc.—distribution center, Kearney

Business Advantages:

The Nebraska Advantage Act has significantly enhanced the state's business climate. Department efforts focused on a statewide vision in the global economy and working with companies and communities to address labor availability, accessible employee training programs, financial assistance, available properties that meet clients' needs and other issues. During FY 2009, the Act attracted 34 applications translating to a potential \$290 million investment and 2,124 jobs. Under Nebraska Advantage Rural, nine applications have been submitted with a potential \$21.16 million in investment and 24 jobs, while 311 applicants have been submitted under Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise.

Nebraska also has enjoyed a windfall of national awards and rankings during the past couple years, including:

- Top 10 of "Best States for Business", *Forbes Magazine*, 2008
- 2nd Best Job Market for Job Creation, Gallup Organization "Job Creation Index", 2010
- 3rd of "Lowest Cost of Doing Business", Milken Institute, Cost of Doing Business Index
- Top 10 of "States Receiving a 5-Star on the 2007 States Healthcare Cost Quotient", *Expansion Management Magazine*, 2007
- 2nd for the "Fairness of Litigation Environment", Institute for Legal Reform, US Chamber of Commerce State Liability Systems Ranking Study 2008

- 3rd in “Employment per Population Ratio for Populations of 16+ years of age”, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007
- 1st in “Gazelle Jobs” (firms with annual sales revenue that has grown 20 percent or more for four straight years), Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2007 State New Economy Index, 2007
- 4th for the “Best Quality of Life”, *Business Facilities Magazine*, Annual Rankings Report, 2008
- 5th for the “Best Education Climate”, *Business Facilities Magazine*, Annual Rankings Report, 2008
- 4th “Best State for Jobs”, CareerBuilder.com, 2008
- 4th “Lowest Average Travel Time to Work”, U.S. Bureau of the Census