

News to Educate, Engage, and Empower Entrepreneurs

NEBRASKA CELEBRATES NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK IN STYLE

Vital Role Played by Nebraska Entrepreneurs in our State's Economic Vitality Recognized February 21-28, 2009



From start to finish, the third annual National Entrepreneurship Week was celebrated in great style across Nebraska. Schools, communities, and organizations came together to highlight the importance of entrepreneurs not only to our state, but also to our entire nation.

Mentoring by the Masters Entrepreneurship Video Conference and Webcast

On February 24th, the Nebraska Center for Entrepreneurship and the Central Community College locations of Columbus, Grand Island, and Hasting, as well as Northeast Community College, hosted an interactive panel discussion and web-stream for students, business owners, and community members.



Participants had the opportunity to interact with some of

Nebraska's entrepreneurial "Masters" to learn practical insights into starting and growing their own business.

Eleven entrepreneurs from across the state and from a wide variety of businesses shared their personal histories and told the audience of the thrills and the pitfalls of being an entrepreneur. Those who were not able to attend one of the host locations will be able to view the event on-line by going to www.entrepreneurship.unl.edu.

MarketPlace: Opening Doors to Success a Big Hit in North Platte

Nearly six hundred entrepreneurs, service providers, students, and educators were on hand in North Platte for yet another successful MarketPlace conference.

MarketPlace fills a unique niche because it is focused on providing networking opportunities and educational programming for current and prospective entrepreneurs. The numbers for the conference have grown each year which is a real testament to the hard work of the Center for Rural Affairs and the planning committee.



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www.nde.state.ne.us/entreped/



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NEBRASKA CELEBRATES ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK IN STYLE

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The day kicked off with 24 year old CEO and founder of JM Web Designs, Jonathan Patton, as the opening keynote speaker. Young Patton started his business at the age of 14, working individually out of his bedroom, and has grown it into a thriving business with over 15 employees and an international clientele.

Nebraska Summit on Entrepreneurship

The big event that wrapped up the statewide activities was the fourth annual Nebraska Summit on Entrepreneurship. The Summit is sponsored by the Gallup Organization, the Nebraska Business-Higher Education Forum, and the University of Nebraska and is a major highlight of E-Week activities in the state each year.

The morning began with an array of high-powered dignitaries who shared their views on the importance of entrepreneurship. The dignitaries offering perspectives included Pete Kotsiopoulos, Vice President for University Affairs for the University of Nebraska, James Milliken, President of the University of Nebraska, and Governor Dave Heineman.

Bo Fishback, Vice President of Entrepreneurship for the Kauffman Foundation, not only shared information about the Foundation's many-faceted programs, but also shared positive insights about entrepreneurship in the context of today's gloomy economic headlines. As Fishback stated, entrepreneurship is counter-cyclical. So, now is actually a GREAT time for innovation, creativity, and the spirit of entrepreneurship.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK 2010

It isn't too early to mark your calendars for the 4th Annual National Entrepreneurship Week. As always, it takes place the last full week in February and for 2010 the dates are February 20-27.

Tom Townsend, President and CEO of Scooter's Coffeehouse provided some down-to-earth, real-world context for the morning. Mr. Townsend was able to give the assembly an entertaining perspective



The panel of entrepreneurship students at the Summit provided valuable insights about what they have gained from their programs of study.

entrepreneur was definitely one of the hits of the morning. Another hit was the panel of students from Lincoln Public Schools, Southeast Community College, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Following the panel, the delegation moved to a luncheon with keynote speaker Kimberly Loui, the Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of University Initiatives for Arizona State University. The array of entrepreneurship initiatives and programs underway at ASU is truly amazing.

Following the luncheon, participants broke into groups to hear from expert panels on three distinctly different tracks: Sustaining Entrepreneurship in our Global Economy, Financing Entrepreneurship in Today's Environment, and Creating New Business Ventures Through Entrepreneurship Education.

Nebraska can be extremely proud of the way National Entrepreneurship Week was celebrated again.

For ongoing updates about activities nationwide celebrating this special week, PLUS events happening throughout the year, log in to www.nationaleweek.org/.

HORMEL FAMILY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THIRD ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

(McCook, NE – March 23, 2009) The Hormel Family Foundation (www.investmccook.com) has begun accepting submissions for its third annual business plan competition in McCook, Nebraska. The competition, which targets local entrepreneurs and business owners, will take place on June 12 at the Hormel Business & Technology Center on the McCook Community College campus.

“We have very high expectations for this year’s competition,” said project initiator and Hormel Family Foundation board member Ben Hormel Harris.

Hormel Family
Foundation

Hometown Business & Community Pride in McCook, Nebraska

“In today’s challenging economic climate, it is more important than ever to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, because ultimately, that is what will carry us forward,” he added.

The Hormel Business Plan Competition is an initiative designed to promote and support entrepreneurs in McCook, and to attract new business to the area. Start-ups and existing business owners are equally welcome to submit their business plans. The deadline for the competition applications is May 27, 2009.

On June 12th, a judges’ panel comprised of local business and community leaders will identify the most promising business plan tailored to the McCook region. The winning entrepreneur or team will be eligible to receive a \$25,000 cash investment in exchange for a minority stake in the business. The winner will also be the beneficiary of consulting and advertising services valued at \$10,000.

THIRD ANNUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT FOCUSES ON MANAGING AGE DIVERSITY

The 3rd annual Economic Development Summit for Northeast Nebraska will be held at the new Nielsen Community Center in West Point, Nebraska on Thursday, April 23, 2009 from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Keynote speakers include John Cass, founding Fellow and Advisory Board member for the Society of New

This year, the Hormel Family Foundation is organizing the Annual Business Plan Competition in cooperation with Invest Nebraska Corporation, a state-wide non-profit organization dedicated to angel investment and entrepreneurship in Nebraska.

“We are very excited about the collaboration,” said Invest Nebraska Executive Director Dan Hoffman.

“This initiative is a perfect fit with our mission to promote capital formation and provide operating assistance to entrepreneurs and investors in Nebraska,” he continued, adding that Invest Nebraska Corporation will organize two regional business plan competitions earlier this year. For more information, refer to www.investnebraska.com.

Spearheaded by the Hormel Family Foundation, the Hormel Business Plan Competition enjoys generous support from Community Hospital and McCook Community Development Company, comprised of AmFirst Bank, McCook National Bank and Wells Fargo.

To learn more about the Hormel Business Plan Competition, visit www.investmccook.com, or contact Susan Harris-Broomfield at 308.340.0856.

The Hormel Family Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to the McCook Community College campus in McCook, Nebraska. McCook Community College is part of the Mid-Plains Community College system. Founded in 1999 by the late Ben F. Hormel, it provided the funding for the Ben F. Hormel Technology Center for Business and Industry on the McCook Community College campus.

Communications Research, Dr. Marty Mahler, Executive Director of the Nebraska P-16 Initiative, and Dr. Ron Hanson, professor of Agricultural Economics and 2008 UNL Educator of the Year.

Register online at <http://cariregistration.unl.edu>. Cost is \$29 for first registrant, \$19 for each additional.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES WEBINAR SERIES

Entrepreneurs and Their Communities, a part of eXtension, has created a series of Webinars to help entrepreneurs and communities think more entrepreneurially as well as provide tips on being a wise entrepreneur. The next two webinars are focused on Tips and Tricks for Successful Farmers Markets (April 8th) and Finding Your Target Market Using MarketMaker (May 13th). Webinars take place at 2:00 p.m. EST; 1:00 p.m. CST; 12:00 p.m. MST; 11:00 a.m. PST.



eXtension is an interactive learning environment delivering the best, most researched

knowledge from the smartest land-grant university minds across America. eXtension connects knowledge consumers with knowledge providers - experts who know their subject matter inside out.

How to Connect to the Webinars

No pre-registration is required and there is no fee to participate. About 10 minutes prior to the start time simply go the Adobe Connect Pro meeting room at <http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/ecop/>.

You will be presented with a login screen that has an "Enter as Guest" option. Enter your first name, last name and state, then click "Enter Room" to join the conference. To hear the audio of the workshop and participate in the Q&A portion of the workshop they will be using a built-in teleconferencing capability of Adobe™ Connect Pro conferencing software. Once you log into the meeting you will be presented with the option to enter your call-back number OR there will be a toll-free number for you to call. If you are calling from a telephone extension (i.e. a caller cannot dial your direct line) then you will need to call in. After entering your number you will be automatically called and joined into the audio portion of the Web conference on your phone.

April 8th, 2009

Tips and Tricks for Successful Farmers Markets

Join Jennifer Dennis, Specialty Crops Marketing Specialist, Purdue University for a farmers' market warm-up for the coming season. This webinar will deal with proven strategies that make farmers' markets successful. Is it the advertising they do, the location, the extra events associated with the market? Recommended for farmers' market managers, farmers, craftspeople, artisans as well as business coaches and mentors.

May 13th, 2009

Finding your Target Market Using MarketMaker

Join Dar Knipe, Marketing and Business Development Specialist, University of Illinois for an informative session on how to find your target market and how to use MarketMaker. MarketMaker is an interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets of agricultural products. It provides an important link between producers and consumers. This session will wrap up our webinar series for the summer.

You can see upcoming topics by going to http://www.extension.org/pages/Upcoming_Webinar_Topics. All webinars are scheduled for the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 2:00-3:00pm (Eastern).

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For all its current economic woes, America remains a beacon of entrepreneurialism. Between 1996 and 2004 it created an average of 550,000 small businesses every month.

Many of those businesses rapidly grow big.

—The United States of Entrepreneurs, *The Economist*, March 12, 2009

CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS PRESENTS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD TO LARRY HARBOUR

Lyons, NE - On the eve of the Center for Rural Affairs' MarketPlace conference held in North Platte, Nebraska on February 25, 2009, Larry Harbour was honored for his efforts, integrity and leadership. Larry received the Center for Rural Affairs' Entrepreneur award.

The Center for Rural Affairs works to strengthen small businesses, family farms and ranches, and rural communities. This is the third year they hosted MarketPlace, an entrepreneurial conference.



Larry Harbour speaks during MarketPlace Conference.

"Moving to a small town from Omaha was a bit of a culture shock, but I knew my commitment to honesty and hard work would be appreciated in my new community," commented Harbour.

"And the assistance I received from the Center for Rural Affairs was a great help. Dena Beck kept me focused and together we got the information I needed to grow my business."

Larry Harbour established LB Custom Chrome and Detail, LLC, in Broken Bow, Nebraska, as a side job in 2001 and officially since October 2006. The business provides "quality detailing with unsurpassed service."

He and his wife moved to Broken Bow from Omaha in 1998. Like many entrepreneurs, Larry decided to take a risk by renting a shop in a downtown location in Broken Bow in October 2006. The risk paid off. For the first year, Larry's detailing business had a 1-2 month wait list and the business was off and rolling.

In the winter of 2007, Larry heard about Center for Rural Affairs' REAP office hours at the Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce and decided to make an appointment. After many months of working on a business plan with REAP Business Specialist Dena Beck, Larry was approved by a local bank for a loan to expand his business to a new location in Broken Bow.

Dena also helped Larry research ways to use renewable energy in his business.

"Dena truly was a huge help being accessible with regular office hours (in Broken Bow). She has good connections and ideas that allowed me to assess whether my project would be worth pursuing, commented Harbour."

One of those connections was USDA Rural Development. When Larry expressed a desire for energy efficiency and operating as "green" as possible, Dena referred him to USDA Rural Development's Energy Efficiency program. Kelley Messenger, USDA Area Specialist worked with Larry and states, "USDA Rural Development is very pleased to be able to assist a small business in rural Nebraska by providing grant assistance through our 9006 Renewable and Energy Efficiency Improvement Grant Program. This new geothermal system will be able to assist Larry Harbour's business by allowing him to use a renewable energy source to help improve the operations of his business."



Dena Beck presents Center for Rural Affairs Entrepreneur Award to Larry Harbour.

The expansion will allow LB Custom Chrome and Detail to add two additional jobs, totaling one part-time and two full-time. "The assistance Larry received through the REAP Program has been a difference maker, and REAP is very proud to have played a part in the successful expansion of Larry's business," commented Beck.

"It feels really good to work hard and accomplish something such as starting a business and get recognized for it," Harbour continued. "It was an unexpected surprise, but a grand privilege to receive such an award as the Entrepreneur of the year award."

SANDHILL CRANE MIGRATION LEADS TO NEWLY-CREATED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PROGRAMS



Sandhill cranes have brought people together from across the world, and now they have led to the creation of yet another entrepreneurial partnership in Nebraska.

The Hall County Visitors Bureau is teaming up with GROW Nebraska to offer a GROW Gift Shop in the Wings Over the Platte Visitors' Center at the Alda I-80 exit this crane viewing season.

GROW Nebraska CEO Janell Anderson Ehrke is excited about the joint venture. "Our goal at GROW has always been to provide marketing opportunities for our members. The GROW Gift Shop will allow crane viewers from around the world the opportunity to purchase real Nebraska products made by Nebraskans."

Beginning March 1, the GROW Gift Shop will be open seven days a week, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The GROW Gift Shop will offer a number of food and gift items for the many visitors "flocking" to the area to watch the annual migration of sandhill cranes, ducks and geese. More than 30 GROW Nebraska members will feature products there.

"GROW Nebraska is excited about the opportunity to welcome visitors to central Nebraska and introduce them to some of Nebraska's entrepreneurs and quality items for purchase that reflect well on our state," said Don Reynolds, one of the managers of both the GROW Gift Shop and the Grand Island GROW Nebraska Store located in the Conestoga Mall.

Molly Johnsen also helps manage the two locations. "The gift shop will provide visitors from out of state the opportunity to purchase Nebraska-made goods," she said. "A lot of the time they don't venture into the cities to find things, so I think this is a nice way to offer what we have."

If past attendance figures are any indicator for this year's season, there should be plenty of visitors to the center. According to Renee Seifert, Executive

Director of Hall County Visitors Bureau, both the Rowe Sanctuary and Crane Meadows have traditionally averaged 15,000 visitors during the six-week crane viewing season.

Seifert also is excited about the partnership with GROW Nebraska. "The purpose is really to provide as much for the visitors as possible. We want to give them not only the experience of getting into a blind and hearing the sound they (the cranes) make when they take off or land, but provide them with knowledge about the birds, and give them the opportunity to take a little bit of Nebraska home with them, and to overall promote Nebraska-made products."



People from Virginia, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado and Texas have already booked tours this year through the web site wingsoverthepplatte.com, said Seifert.

"Crane viewing truly crosses all socio-economic barriers. You don't have to be rich. We have visitors from all walks of life and all social and financial brackets," Seifert said. "Previously visitors have come from as far as Germany, Japan, Russia and Denmark. This is the only place in the world that this particular phenomenon occurs."

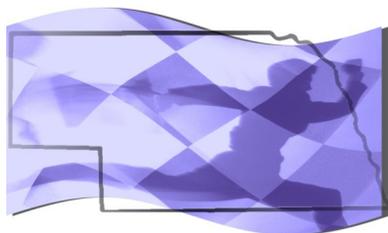
Anderson Ehrke is especially enthusiastic about the variety of visitors. "We want to take GROW to the next level and market our members' products globally," she said. "This is a great opportunity to expand internationally."

A program of Central Plains Foundation Inc., GROW Nebraska helps maximize the state's entrepreneurial spirit and build the global reputation of Nebraska businesses by providing sustainable business environments through business-building marketing and education. To learn more about GROW Nebraska, or Nebraska entrepreneurs and businesses, visit the GROW web site at: www.grownebraska.org.

To view video of the annual crane migration, check out <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/guides/migration/sandhill.asp>.

SURVEY: NEBRASKA EDGE HAVING AN IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIES

Amid a struggling economy, home-grown small businesses are key to a community's health, and the NebraskaEDGE program continues to play an important role in nurturing entrepreneurship, according to a new study.



NebraskaEDGE (E n h a n c i n g , D e v e l o p i n g a n d G r o w i n g E n t r e p r e n e u r s) i s U n i v e r s i t y o f N e b r a s k a - L i n c o l n E x t e n s i o n ' s

umbrella organization for rural entrepreneurial training programs hosted by local communities, organizations and associations. More than 2,500 people from 328 Nebraska communities have enrolled in the training programs since 1993.

A recently completed five-year review illustrates NebraskaEDGE's impact from 2002-2007, during which 868 individuals participated in classes in 27 communities. Nearly 800 individuals were invited to participate in the survey; 298 responded, or more than 37 percent.

Marilyn Schlake, associate director of NebraskaEDGE, was pleased by the survey's findings. "People are using the skills they've learned in our program and putting them into their businesses," she said.

Among the findings:

- ☑ Forty-five percent of respondents had an established business when they enrolled in EDGE; 34 percent had an idea for a business; and 21 percent had a start-up business less than a year old.
- ☑ Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported they'd increased their interaction with other local business owners, and 48 percent increased their support to other business owners. Such local involvement is key to small-business success, Schlake said.
- ☑ "This type of program really operates best in the context of the community and community

support," Schlake said. "These businesses do need that community interaction; they do need the community's help."

- ☑ Seventy-one percent said they'd completed business plans; 15 percent said their business plans were still in progress.
- ☑ Eighteen percent of respondents with a business idea said they'd established, acquired or purchased a business as a result of the EDGE program.
- ☑ Thirty-five percent of the respondents who had an existing business said they'd expanded their business.

A separate business survey, with 120 respondents, provided additional details about EDGE's impact:

- ☑ Fifty-three percent of participants said they had full-time or part-time employees during the previous year. Of the 64 businesses with employees, there was an increase in employment; average part-time employment rose by an average of 1 employee per business, and full-time by 1.14 per business. Also, seasonal part-time employees were up .45 employees per business.
- ☑ Average business assets rose from \$189,729 before EDGE participation to \$316,748.
- ☑ Total sales and receipts in 2007 for EDGE survey respondents ranged from zero to \$6 million. Fifty percent reported \$70,000 or less in gross sales; 25 percent had at least \$250,000. Average sales for full-time businesses in 2007 were \$622,041 and, for part-time businesses, \$24,064.
- ☑ Sixty-three percent of respondents reported an increase in sales from 2006 to 2007, with an average increase of \$221,371; 23 percent reported sales stayed stable; the rest reported decreases.
- ☑ Of the 43 businesses that reported a net profit in 2007, 58 percent attributed their participation in EDGE as contributing 25 percent toward their success, while 25 percent gave EDGE 50 percent of the credit.

CARI
Center for Applied Rural Innovation

EDGE, a part of the university's Center for Applied Rural Innovation, was created in 1993. More information is available at <http://nebraskaedge.unl.edu/>.

Targeted Teaching Topic

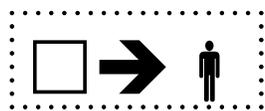


THE POWER OF SIMPLE VISUAL IMAGINING

Every office dweller, businessperson, entrepreneur and student has probably sat through an interminable presentation that involved PowerPoint slide after PowerPoint slide, each one seemingly filled with endless text. Some presenters, marketers, and salespeople seem to be under the mistaken impression that “more is better” when the actual watchwords should be “less is more!”

Tuning out even the most impressive and noteworthy content is inevitable if the listener or viewer gets bored or simply is overwhelmed with the concepts or information being presented. PowerPoint was invented to be a tool, not the whole show. Getting the message across means thinking from the standpoint of the people you are trying to convince, educate, and inform.

“*The Back of the Napkin*” by Dan Roam speaks to the importance of simple visual imaging. Drawing on twenty years of visual problem solving, and supporting the argument with discoveries in vision science, Mr. Roam makes a convincing argument that anyone can “clarify a problem or sell an idea by visually breaking it down using a simple set of visual-thinking tools.” He believes that everyone has innate abilities to “look, see, imagine, and show.”



So, you say you’re not artistic? He begs to differ. In fact, he says that if you can draw a box, arrow, and stick figure, you’re set. You too can *discover* ideas, *develop* ideas, and *sell* ideas.

As the author puts it, “Any problem can be made clearer with a picture, and any picture can be created using the same set of tools and rules.” He believes that we have three built-in tools to become great at solving problems:

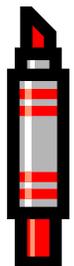
1. Our eyes
2. Our mind’s eye
3. Our hand-eye coordination



Accessorizing these with paper and pens/pencils or a whiteboard and erasable markers, our toolbox is full of everything need to discover, develop and sell ideas.

The next concept it is important to grasp is that there are three kinds of visual thinkers (at least according to the author)

1. Black Pen People: “Hand me the pen” People—People who can’t wait to start drawing. (25%)
2. Yellow Pen People: “I can’t draw” People—People happy to add to someone else’s work. (50%)
3. Red Pen People: “I’m not visual” People who question it all. (25%)



Whether you are a black pen, yellow pen, or red pen person, practice using the three basic figures (plus a few others) the next time you’re trying to “sell” an idea or concept to an individual or group. Grab a pen or marker, a piece of paper or back of a napkin, and start sketching out what you’re trying to say. You might just be amazed at the how effective a salesperson you have become!

WEB RESOURCES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

StartUp Nation recently shared five excellent web resources for female entrepreneurs. Check 'em out.

Ladies Who Launch

A media company focused on providing resources and connections for women entrepreneurs. The website provides community, tools, resources and success stories. www.ladieswholaunch.com

National Association of Women Business Owners

This website has an amazing array of resources for women entrepreneurs that can help them build their business. The site offers discounts on useful products and services for members. The association also offers a free newsletter with brief summaries of relevant articles on national business trends, economic issues, networking, effective presentations and sales strategies. www.nawbo.org

eWomenNetwork

Guess what...this one is focused on networking. Members can “receive free coaching, connect with

other women entrepreneurs and promote their products or services to the most visited, membership-based women's networking organization on the internet.” www.ewomennetwork.com

Center for Women’s Business Research

This site is all about numbers for those searching for financing, government contracts or support. It’s organized for easy access. In addition, their annual Executive Roundtable offers high-level advice and networking opportunities in a one-day format. www.nfwbo.org

Make Mine a Million Business

This organization helps businesses owned by women pass the million-dollar mark. A variety of loan programs can be accessed through the organization created to award loans based on other factors besides credit history. They also encourage volunteers to mentor other women entrepreneurs. www.makemineamillion.org

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For timely information on topics related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (K-20) at the local, state, regional, national and international levels and to share information with others, sign up for the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Education Listserv log on to:
<http://lists.k12.ne.us/mailman/listinfo/entre-ed>



Skills for Lifelong Learning, Earning, and Living