



FOUNDATION LOOKS TO GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE REASON TO STAY

By Jerry Guenther, *Norfolk Daily News*
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Tremendous giving is helping to provide tremendous opportunities for rural areas across Nebraska.

At the recent Nebraska Community Foundation's annual meeting in Norfolk, stories were shared and awards presented for communities' ingenuity in raising funds or helping to make towns more attractive to young people.

Jeff Yost, president and chief executive officer of the Nebraska Community

Foundation, said Nebraskans have a history of giving time, talent and treasure to churches and higher education.

In recent years, Nebraskans are broadening their charitable giving to include their communities, providing incentives to get more young people to return or stay in their communities, he said.

Yost is a native of Red Cloud, which also was the home of author Willa Cather. There was probably no other author whose writings emphasized a sense of place more than Cather, he said.

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ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURS: CHARTING A COURSE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES



A new guide, *Energizing Entrepreneurs: Charting a Course for Rural Communities*, is now available for rural community development professionals and volunteer community leaders who are helping to transform their communities into hotbeds of entrepreneurship. The insights shared in the book are drawn from the experience of rural communities that are in the process of reassessing their economic development approaches and planning strategically for their future.

The 187-page softbound book was written by Deb Markley and Don Macke of the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, and Vicki Luther of the Heartland Center for Leadership Development. It can be purchased for \$23, shipping included, through The Heartland Center at www.heartlandcenter.info, or 800.927.1115.

For information on energizing entrepreneurs in your community, contact the **RUPRI Center** at 402.323.7336, or visit the new companion website to the book at www.energizingentrepreneurs.org.

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www.nde.state.ne.us/entped/

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Similarly, Nebraskans need to be aware of their sense of place and recognize that rural areas can compete with metro areas, Yost said.

With broadband connections and high-speed Internet, more people can choose to live and work anywhere they want, he said.

Nebraska towns need to look for ways to provide incentives for young people to stay, increase young

people's sense of ownership and foster entrepreneurship, Yost said.

More also needs to be done to make young people aware of the opportunities that already exist in their hometowns, Yost said.

Depending on size, most Nebraska small towns could achieve population stabilization by retaining five to 10 more students from each graduating class, he said.

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MAMA SALSA, INC.

Clasp a firm, confident hand and see blue eyes sparkle upon mention of luscious Mama Salsa products, and you may be meeting Tracy Dietz, co-owner and operator of Mama Salsa Inc., a food processing business in Orleans, Nebraska. Tracy and Sam Dietz pack and process a salsa product for distribution by Farmers Premium Produce marketing company among other outlets. Dietz said, "Our salsa tastes like a garden. Our process maintains the integrity of our ingredients, fresh tomatoes, peppers, and onions."



The rhythmic chopping sounds radiating from the processing area confirm that employees dice and chop the vegetables by hand. "Mama Salsa product is thick and chunky, Dietz says. "We are hand dicing until we can find or invent a machine that will prepare the product according to our standards."

Mama Salsa is hand-packed and produced in small batches by six fulltime employees. "Small batches maintain the integrity of the product and make Mama Salsa special," says Dietz. "I've never gone out and marketed it because it has always sold itself."

From Concept to Product

Prior to committing herself fulltime to Mama Salsa, Inc., Dietz was employed as a loan secretary for a local bank. "Six years of banking experience helped tremendously," said Dietz. "When a banker says collateral, credit, cash flow, balance sheet, I understand."

Dreaming of owning her own business, Dietz thought of many different business ideas, and she wrote business plans for all of them. Her husband, Sam would say, "If you can prove a demand for the product, we will look into it." In 1980 when the salsa idea occurred to her, Dietz produced a case of salsa and arranged to sell it at a local craft show. "I sold it all; I sold it quick; I had orders for more of it; and I later delivered a large order to a gift basket company in North Platte." Dietz said. "My dream took shape, and our business was born."

The University of Nebraska's food processing entrepreneurship program provided help testing the product, labeling and marketing. Dietz said, "People with knowledge of the food industry offered us a wealth of information."

Meeting David Grams, a hydroponic tomato grower in Minden, NE who was simultaneously searching for someone to produce a salsa product from undersized or oversized tomatoes, filled-in another piece in the start-up puzzle.



Janelle Nelson, GROW Nebraska, assists entrepreneurs market and promote their products, develop their assets and incubate their business. GROW Nebraska set Dietz on the pathway to apply for a community block grant. Dietz says, "Janelle's assistance is phenomenal." GROW Nebraska's website is www.growneb.com telephone number 888.476.9632

Tara Hosick, Development Consultant for the Southwest Region, Nebraska Department of Economic

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MAMA SALSA, INC.

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Development (DED), pulled the various partners together including the DED, the Small Business Association, and local banks to apply for a community block grant and job training money and other monies. Hosick provided assistance with the application process and support. "Sometimes I feel like I work at the salsa plant," Hosick says. "I meet with the Dietz's often because we not only help in business start-ups, we also support and advise the business owners beyond the application process."

Mama Salsa, Inc. was awarded a community development block grant to erect a 6,000 square foot building in Orleans to house the processing, packaging and distribution of Mama Salsa products. In addition, the entrepreneur received loans from the Small Business Administration, the local bank, and a private investor.

Vision for the Future

Dietz is engaged in a process to create an entire line of Mama Salsa products. She is testing recipes for green, yellow and red peppers because supplies of peppers are plentiful. Dietz says, "The future involves making a lot of salsa, inventing new products to add to the Mama Salsa line as well as co-packing products for other food businesses."

Co-packing products for food entrepreneurs presents a logical path for growth. The Mama Salsa's test kitchen and food processing area are inspected and licensed by the Nebraska Department of Health. Co-packing with another small producer makes business sense. "We currently are communicating with someone from this region who has a barbecue sauce, and who isn't big enough yet to invest in the infrastructure to pack, label and distribute their product," Dietz says. "We will make it for them while maintaining strict confidentiality, and our co-packing fees are reasonable."

Factors of Success

Gratitude for community support led the Dietz's to establish Mama Salsa in Orleans. Dietz says, "I want to give back to a community that has given me a lifetime of memories and support."

Small town life fosters relationships. "People in Orleans want this to work, and they are all supportive," Dietz said. "I can call people at 10:00 p.m. with an idea, and they are receptive to talking it over with me."

Family and friends are included on her list of success

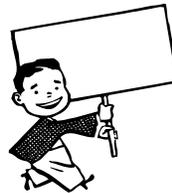
factors. "Today our thirteen year old is taking my place in the shipping area," Dietz says. "Among many other tasks, he runs a fork lift in shipping."

Ease of hiring new employees surprised Dietz. She says, "We advertised only in regional newspapers and received applications from 45 people who live within 30 miles of Orleans."

Connecting with and engaging the community, customers, vendors, and professionals in the food business may be success factors for the business. Dietz says, "We surround ourselves with knowledgeable people and learn from them."

Challenges

The process of discovering and acquiring resources has been among the challenges for the Dietz family. Dietz says, "Knowing who to contact and where to go to get help challenges new entrepreneurs."



Hiring a marketing firm to handle Mama Salsa product is high on Dietz's list of challenges. "Finding a firm to market our product presents a huge obstacle for the company," she says, "Companies say that they already represent a salsa company, or Mama Salsa is too small."

Rewards

Watching the business grow energizes Dietz. Dietz says, "I get a rush when I see someone pick up a jar of salsa knowing they are spending their money on a jar of something we produce."

Story courtesy of www.businessbeyondthefarm.com, rural Nebraska alumni database, network and marketing service.



BIZFIND: NEW TOOL FOR ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING, RETAINING, AND TRANSITIONING SMALL BUSINESS IN NEBRASKA

BizFind (<http://bizfind.unk.edu>) is a new project designed to address the needs of communities and businesses alike. A non-profit cooperative venture of the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative and the Nebraska Business Development Center at the University of Nebraska Kearney, BizFind is truly unique!

It's mission is simple: **Provide an affordable, easy to use and powerful tool to actively assist with the successful attraction, development, retention and transition of small businesses through out a state.**

BizFind provides solutions for:

- ◆ Existing Business Owners
- ◆ Business Sellers
- ◆ Business Buyers
- ◆ Business Investors
- ◆ Communities
- ◆ Chambers of Commerce
- ◆ Economic Development Councils
- ◆ Business Brokers
- ◆ Realtors
- ◆ Entrepreneurs
- ◆ Business Start-Ups
- ◆ Family Businesses
- ◆ Lenders
- ◆ Downtown or Retail Associations
- ◆ Regional Development
- ◆ Cooperatives or Clusters

A Tool For Success

What is **BizFind**? On the surface, it is a web-based software program that is easy to use and designed to produce results. It combines the most sought after features, data and resources required to assist businesses, entrepreneurs and communities. But BizFind is unique from other applications currently available. It brings all generally required resources together at one location. This saves users time and encourages frequent use.



BizFind is not just software. Its real purpose is to bring people together. Its a tool that brings consultants and clients together. It brings entrepreneurs and communities together. It brings business buyers and sellers together. It encourages cooperative efforts across regions and between programs. In addition to its online features, **BizFind** promotes ongoing one-on-one support through the Nebraska Business Development Center network of business consultants and programs.

If you would like more information about BizFind and how it can assist you or your community, call 308.865.8429 or e-mail bizfind@unk.edu.

ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE RECOGNIZES UNO MAVERICK INSTITUTE

The *World Herald* recently reported that *Entrepreneur* magazine had recognized the Maverick Institute Program as being among the top 10 of its kind nationally. Anne York, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Strategy at UNO, volunteered her time last year to make this program possible.

Entrepreneur recognized the Maverick Entrepreneurship Institute in a "limited curriculum" category that includes 120 colleges and universities. This is quite an achievement to say the least. The reports from students and teachers who participated have been glowing as well. Because of this, a plan is underway to take the program statewide, rather than for it to be just Omaha-based. An initial draft of the plan was presented to the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Task Force (NET-Force) in November. If taken statewide, the program will create partnerships

between high schools, the Nebraska Department of Education, the state Community College system, UNO and local communities. The scheduled "window of opportunity" for the Institutes is June 19-21, so mark your calendars.

For more information or to find out how to become involved, contact:

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP MOVIE-CLIP DATABASE



There are a number of interesting movies that can teach us about entrepreneurship. In fact, some of our greatest films, such as *Citizen Kane*, chronicle the lives of real or fictional entrepreneurs. An interesting new project based at Syracuse University, *Lessons from Hollywood*, hopes to be more systematic about linking films to entrepreneurship education. Syracuse's Whitman School of Management is sponsoring a competition to find the best and most effective movie clips that portray key aspects of the entrepreneurial process. The competition is open to all, and the winner will receive a grand prize of \$1,000. Through the competition and their

own research, the Syracuse team plans to develop a movie clip database that can be utilized by entrepreneurship educators around the world. Contest submissions are due by **March 1, 2006**.

To learn more about the *Lessons from Hollywood* project and the Entrepreneurship-Movie Clip Database (E-MCD) at Syracuse University, visit <http://whitman.syr.edu/eee/falcone/film/index.html>

Source: National Dialogue on Entrepreneurship, Week of December 12 - 16, 2005, www.publicforuminstitute.org/nde.

ORD HITS THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

If you think that only "big city" news makes it into the New York Times...you are WRONG! Ord, Nebraska made it into the November 14, 2005 issue of one of America's most prestigious newspapers.

The article "*In Ord, Neb., the Latest Success Is 20 New Residents*" was written by Kenneth J. Stier and talked about how small town America can measure success. In Ord, that translated to ten young couples, all professionals, moving to the town of 2,269.

The article states, "Six of the 10 couples who moved to Ord received some relocation assistance from the new Valley County Foundation, as well as from the county's economic development board. Although it is unclear how this help affected their decision to move directly, it was a factor for all of them."



If you pull out a map of Nebraska, you'll find Ord located in Valley County. It's geographic location, perched on the edge

of the Sandhills region of the state, gives it a unique ability to serve the needs of eight surrounding communities and eight neighboring counties.

The Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF), a statewide nonprofit organization based in Lincoln, was a key partner in establishing the Ord Foundation, as well as many like it across the state. The numbers are

impressive. NCF has developed a statewide presence, and is currently working with 164 affiliated funds operating in 162 communities in 66 of Nebraska's 93 counties. A map on the Nebraska Foundation's web site at <http://www.nebcommfound.org/Bigmap.htm> allows you to easily access individual foundations and is definitely worth a look.

One of the key issues facing Nebraska is the so-called "brain drain" that is pulling young people out of the state. They see opportunities as being strictly in metropolitan areas, while in actuality, rural America has much to offer, especially for young families. The quality of life, the quality of education, and the richness of truly belonging to a community are factors that can be used to attract our best and brightest back to the state, or to keep them here in the first place.



NEW RESOURCES FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION



As interest in entrepreneurship education has heightened in recent years, authors and publishers have responded with new resources for educators. At the recent Entrepreneurship Education Forum in Orlando, Florida, a wonderful array of exhibitors were on hand to introduce their products, which ranged from virtual learning resources like GoVenture and Virtual Business, to textbook and learning resources from major publishers such as Thomson South-Western Publishing and Glencoe-McGraw Hill.

As always, the Nebraska Department of Education does not endorse any products or services, but simply offers information for your consideration. Three new textbooks with 2006 copyrights are either now available or will be in April of 2006.

Here's the scoop on these resources.

Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management

Kathleen R. Allen, Ph.D., and Earl Meyer
McGraw Hill-Glencoe © 2006

Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management has undergone a complete revision that, according to the publisher's web site "will give students the information and decision-making skills necessary to start a small business and make it grow. It also benefits students who don't start or run their own businesses. It gives employees a look at the business arena and helps all students understand their roles as consumers." There is also special emphasis on the Business Plan.

Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Civics and Government are integrated throughout the chapters. In addition, real world applications from Standard and Poor's and BusinessWeek are included. Student activities and teacher support can be found at the Online Learning Center.

Source: <http://www.glencoe.com/catalog/>



Entrepreneurship - Ideas in Action

Cynthia L. Greene
Thomson South-Western, 3rd Edition, © 2006
Available Now

As evidenced by the fact that this is the 3rd edition of this book, *Entrepreneurship: Ideas in Action* has found a ready market for its content. The text takes students step-by-step through the entire process of starting and running a business. Creating a business plan is covered extensively, and a business plan project is part of every chapter.



Each chapter ends with a Case Study and a BPA, DECA, or FBLA Prep to help students prepare for competitive events. Highlights of real entrepreneurs' pitfalls present the realities of entrepreneurial challenges. The book combines activities, updated computer applications, new Internet activities, and an enhanced Web site that will help students launch their business ideas.

Source: <http://websites.swlearning.com/>

Exploring Entrepreneurship

Cynthia L. Greene
Thomson South-Western, 1st Edition, © 2007
Available in April of 2006

Exploring Entrepreneurship is a student text with data CD that is designed for middle/junior high school students. The focus is on learning concepts and processes associated with successful entrepreneurial performance, which may give them a more realistic view of entrepreneurship.

The web site states, "A consistent use of easy-to-find features in each chapter will help students relate to prior knowledge, their experiences, and other core subjects. Based on real-life experiences of teenage entrepreneurs, the text teaches critical thinking skills by using relevant activities.

As a culminating activity, students work in teams to develop a proposal to start a new business, a self-analysis (including the willingness to take risks), an analysis of the business situation, and a description of the way the business will operate. A general explanation of the financing of the business throughout the first three years of operation is also taught.

Targeted Teaching Topic



PRODUCT/SERVICE CREATION PART II

Niche Marketing Goes to the Dogs (and Cats, Birds....)

In Issue 7 of Nebraska E-News Monthly, the Targeted Teaching Topic focused on Product/Service Creation with a Nebraska products-oriented flavor. This issue, our Topic takes a bigger picture outlook at a very real trend...the increasing importance and value that people are placing on pets. If you are a pet owner, you can relate to an article written by Lisa Johnson for MarketingPros.com. In the article, A Nation of Dog Lovers: Reaching Out to Pet Owners, Ms. Johnson focuses on the significant impact that our love of pets has for entrepreneurs.

Our fascination with pets has led to the development of everything from couture clothing to travel and photo shoots! All you have to do is tune into one of the many TV channels that focus on celebrities, and you can see pets (and what they are wearing or being transported in) right there with their famous owners. Approximately 31% of women say they spend more time with their pet than their spouse or significant other. For men, that percentage is approximately 15%, according to Hartz's May 2005 Human-Animal Bond survey.



The survey also found that 16% of women (and 6% of men) would dump a boyfriend or girlfriend whom their pet didn't like. Finally, the American Veterinary Medical Association found that 54% of all US households own at least one pet. What's more—47% of those owners consider their pets full-fledged family members.

BizRate Research Conclusions

According to a BizRate Research study for Shopzilla, most women see their pets as a higher priority than their partners do. Here's what 901 pet owners surveyed had to say about their animal companions:

- Over a third (34%) of pet owners—39% of women and 27% of men—say they would take their animal to a pet groomer, therapist or psychic.
- Just under a third (31%) of owners say they would consider having a pet funeral. Once again, women are much more likely (37%) than men (21%) to say so.

Social and Cultural Forces at Work—Entrepreneurs...Pay Attention!

- Pets are the new people. Pets are an increasingly important part of the family, and giving them treats, services or special gifts is a fun way to celebrate one of our least-complicated relationships.
- Pets are big business. The American Pet Product Manufacturers Association reports that Americans spent \$34.4 billion on their pets in 2004. They peg 2005 expenditures at \$35.9 billion.
- There are more pets than people in the US: 377.8 million pets, 290 million people. However you break it down, that's a lot of rubber chew toys, custom-made carriers and kitty massages.
- Pets are becoming preferred travel companions. The Travel Industry Association reports that 29 million Americans (14% of all animal owners) travel with their pets—and that number is quickly rising.

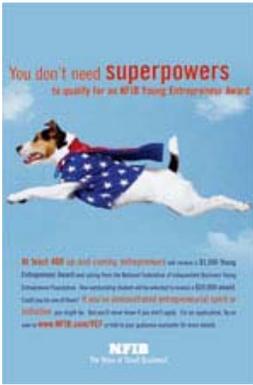


If all this pet pampering seems like a temporary trend, think about how baby and children's products have changed in the last 5-10 years. Kids' clothes have gone from hand-me-downs to luxury labels, and there's been a massive influx of programs, toys and innovations for children. This industry provides the perfect crystal ball for helping to predict where pet products and services are heading.

Lisa Johnson (lisa@reachwomen.com) is the CEO of ReachWomen (www.reachwomen.com). She is also a coauthor of *Don't Think Pink: What Really Makes Women Buy—And How to Increase Your Share of this Crucial Market* (AMACOM, 2004).

YOU DON'T NEED SUPER POWERS TO QUALIFY...AND NEBRASKANS WON IN 2005!

The NFIB Young Entrepreneur Foundation awarded 381 scholarships to future entrepreneurs with the 2005 NFIB Free Enterprise Scholars Awards, a scholarship program to set future small-business owners on the path to entrepreneurship. The Free Enterprise Scholars will attend the university, college, community college, or vocational/technical institute of their choice with \$1,000 in tuition assistance from the NFIB Young Entrepreneur Foundation. The scholarships are supported by the Foundation's endowment, and by many small-business leaders, corporations and foundations nationwide.



To make it even easier, **applicants can apply online** by going to the Scholarship Program Administrator's Web site. The application link is at <http://www.nfib.com/page/nfibYoungEntrepreneurAward.html>

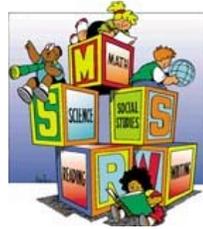
Nebraska students who received scholarships in 2005 were:

Free Enterprise Scholars Awards

Michael Brauer-Centennial High School, Utica
Cassandra Brauer-Lakeview High School, Columbus
Megan Hein-Southeast High School, Lincoln

NFIB/VISA USA Free Enterprise Scholars Award

Abby Gross-Blair High School, Blair
Jason Hartman-Westside High School, Omaha
Brandi Harders-Grand Island Northwest High School, Omaha



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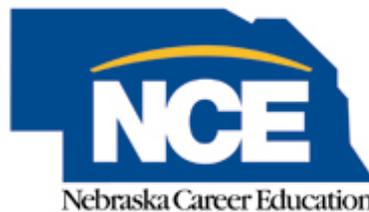
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