



NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact Betty VanDeventer at betty.vandeventer@nebraska.gov or 402.471.4537
Oct. 13, 2015

FIVE NEBRASKA BUSINESS OWNERS RECEIVE 2015 ENTREPRENEUR OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Five Nebraska business owners who received assistance from Nebraska VR were recognized today for their success.

The following three business owners received the 2015 Entrepreneur of Distinction Award:



David Ficke, owner of Babyboomers' Cycles, Seward. Ficke started his business in 2013 with the ability and skills to repair and maintain anything mechanical, electrical or electronic. Ficke specializes in early and late model Harley Davidson motorcycles but works on all makes of motorcycles and ATVs. Workplace accommodations enabled David to work on motorcycles when his disability could have been an employment barrier. Ficke said his website and Facebook page are good marketing tools but not as good as his satisfied customers.



Mike Hersh, owner of Patriot Family Chiropractic, Omaha. Two months after starting his business in January 2012, Hersh's business generated a profit. By the second year, his chiropractic practice's gross income had tripled. Hersh strives to offer only the best all-natural care and to deliver real, lasting results through simple, easy-to-follow solutions. Through long work hours, weekend marketing events and healthy life style workshops the business has continued to grow. Hersh's contributions to his community include an annual Thanksgiving food drive, adopting families for Christmas gifts and coat drive for Lydia House.



Pam Baltzer, owner of Ascent Tutoring, Omaha. Since August 2012, Baltzer has tutored K-12 and homeschool students, college students, adults and students with disabilities in the subjects of math and science. Baltzer was the sole proprietor of her business but has recently formed a limited liability company and expanded services to include website development for businesses. From 2013 – 2015, business revenue has

more than doubled. Baltzer gives back to her community by helping other business owners with their websites and serving as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council.

The 2015 Entrepreneur of Distinction Alumni Award was presented this year to two recipients. Each recipient was chosen because of their continued success and contributions to their communities.



Jake VanHorn, owner of VanHorn Saddlery, Ogallala. Since VanHorn received the 2011 Entrepreneur of Distinction Award, he has continued to grow his business. He soon will pay off his investments in machinery, which will generate an increase in revenue. VanHorn volunteers with the local 4-H club, conducting saddle-fitting seminars and supports the 4-H club's year-end awards by donating items for the rodeo queen and prince.



Vern Roso, owner of Upholstery Rescue, Lincoln. Roso received the 2009 Entrepreneur of Distinction Award and continues to grow his business through referrals from satisfied, repeat customers. Repeat customers from the City of Lincoln, YMCA, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Wesleyan, area restaurants, car dealerships and local high schools comprise about 90 percent of his business. Increased business revenues from the last several years have allowed Roso to purchase a home. Roso donates to the YMCA to provide memberships for low-income families and opportunities to attend summer camp.

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts, Nebraska Education Commissioner Matt Blomstedt and Nebraska VR Director Mark Schultz recognized the accomplishments of the award winners.

"The value of these self-employment successes goes well beyond the positive economic impact they have in our state," Ricketts said. "These small businesses provide independence to the individuals while contributing to the state's tax base, and are part of the fabric of our communities that is inclusive of people who experience disabilities."

"It is an honor to recognize individuals who have overcome personal challenges to build successful Nebraska businesses," Nebraska Education Commissioner Matt Blomstedt said. "We also recognize you for your willingness to give back to your community by assisting others."

Blomstedt recognized the work of Nebraska VR staff members who work to help individuals return to work, build businesses and live independently in their communities.

"These individuals were able to take an idea for a business and, with the appropriate information and support, make their goal of self-employment a reality. Their dedication and persistence is a model for others and the recognition they are receiving is well deserved," Schultz said.

The business owners were selected by the Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in recognition of their entrepreneurial spirit and outstanding business success. The Council is comprised of individuals from across the state who have an interest in working with Nebraska VR to ensure that the needs of Nebraskans who experience a disability are being met in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

The 2015 Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards highlight the successful partnership between Nebraska VR and the Abilities Fund. Nebraska VR offers individualized programs to help people with disabilities find employment consistent with their interests, priorities, strengths, talents and choices. Nebraska VR is a division of the Nebraska Department of Education.