



Direction for Business

April 2010



Westward Ho!

A Message from your Chamber President

Executive Committee

Chair of the Board

Kent Brown

Chair Elect

Lisa Crumrine

Past Chair

Tonja Broadwell

Vice Chairs

Don Dunn

Steve Joel

Terry Pfeifer

Board of Directors

Kent Coen

Seanne Emerton

Jack Henry

John Hoggatt

Dr. Chad Hudnall

Dave Koubek

Steve Kunzman

Mark Miller

Mike Morledge

Don Smith

Shane Stava

Steve Toner

Chamber Staff

President

Cindy Johnson

Sarah Arnold

Mary Berlie

Yvonne Birnie

Janell Folkerts

Last Wednesday, eight Grand Island civic and business leaders headed to Kearney to visit with our neighbors to the west. Our agenda was three-part: 1) update Kearney leaders on the new State Fair facilities; 2) ask for their assistance if marketing the tri-cities area to potential fair attendees; 3) and discuss, in general, the importance of sustaining out-state Nebraska's viability by working together, as a region, when it makes good economic sense to do so. Some of you may be scratching your head at this last phrase and asking WHAT??? Aren't Grand Island and Kearney competitors for business recruitment, grand funds, and dare we say it, air service? How could we even think about working collaboratively, given our history of rivalry and the reality of today's competitive recruitment environment?

That was exactly the basis for the conversation. John Hoggatt, President of the Platte Valley State Bank in Grand Island and member of the Chamber's Board of Directors and the "Can Do Group" responsible for area outreach, coordinated the meeting. John's approach to area outreach is enhanced by his familiarity with Hastings and Kearney, having worked in Kearney for over a dozen years. He has seen firsthand how one community benefits from an event or business expansion in a nearby city and knows our neighboring communities will see an economic impact as a result of the State Fair being held in Grand Island. Additionally, John interacted directly with the organizers and participants of the Super Retriever Series (held at the Heartland Public Shooting Park) and knows these people were concerned only with a quality event and experience, on and off the Shooting Park grounds, not with city limits or county lines.

So last week Kearney and Grand Island leaders discussed how events held in Grand Island, such as Husker Harvest Days and the 'new' State Fair positively impact *any business or attraction in the tri-city area who markets to these tens of thousands of visitors*. We discussed how Hall and Adams County were partnering to host the State volleyball tournaments and how that partnership and this event will be good for both communities and Kearney and Aurora and so on. Most

Micki Ward
Lisa Willman

importantly, we acknowledged that central Nebraska needs to cooperate in order to be competitive with eastern Nebraska for businesses, conferences, or state-wide and regional sporting events.

Six years ago I wrote an article on regionalism; redefining our market place to think *beyond* boundaries established when Nebraska became a state 140 years ago, and instead think about what will work for the next century. This means capitalizing on our common interests, recognizing that while water towers, football feuds and 'history' may have been the way our 'market' was defined for the first 100+ years of existence, it is not the most effective way in this global economy. The focus must be shifted to selling our communities as regions – a community of interests that can be as small as a neighborhood or as large as several towns.

In Nebraska, regionalism equates to economic opportunities that otherwise might pass us by. For rural Nebraska, regionalism is, frankly, a way to achieve an economic balance with eastern Nebraska. It means recognizing that collectively the tri-cities can provide more – larger workforce/labor pool and diversity of skills, variety of higher education and training institutions, available and ready business/industrial sites and the amenities desired by today's business leaders and workers – when independently none of the communities could meet all expectations. And, it could very well mean maintaining a population base that supports 93 counties, 3 congressional districts, and a mix of 'out state' and 'eastern' State Senators.

The rewards of banding together as a region to create investment and jobs are great; a HUD study of metropolitan regions found that where communities emphasized *cooperation over competition* within their regions, the result was greater success in expanding economic prosperity and creating jobs. Perfectly understandable. Company owners and management are more interested in labor, cost of doing business and growth potential than they are in city jurisdictions.

As economic realities force businesses to re-think the status quo, community leaders must question whether now is the time to do the same. Is it time (gasp?) to become bold and actually take steps toward developing meaningful regional efforts? Perhaps instead of duplicating costly services, buildings and amenities in each community, focus could be directed toward development of a shared strategic approach, balanced and complementary to the communities within the region, and featuring our very unique characteristics. What if leaders can replace the competitive at all costs approach of yesterday with a regional approach, when it makes good economic sense, based on shared interests. Would opportunities to maximize existing resources and fill needed gaps in regional products, services, or facilities materialize? It won't be easy. Trust and building relationships strong enough to work at this level do not emerge

over night. But without a deliberate decision to collectively explore our potential as a *region*, it's certain nothing will change. Not over night, not in a year, not in a decade.



Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center celebrated their new gift shop and Chamber partnership with a ribbon cutting on March 5, 2010.



Stefani's Closet invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting on March 12, 2010 to celebrate their new Chamber partnership.



Goodwill Industries celebrated the groundbreaking of their new store on South Locust Street on March 19, 2010.



Pig in a Bag celebrated their new Chamber partnership with a ribbon cutting on March 26, 2010.



AseraCare Hospice Business After Hours, March 18, 2010.



Jaime Kreutz and Melissa Griffith visit at the AseraCare Business After Hours.



Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce 2010 Annual Meeting

The 2010 Grand Island Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting witnessed record-

breaking attendance! We filled the arena and evening with a sense of teamwork and community. The speaker for this year's premiere business event, UNL volleyball coach John Cook, injected energy and enthusiasm into our crowd.

Thank you to our wonderful committee and dedicated volunteers who made the night so enjoyable, and to the Annual Meeting event sponsors:

Charter Business
General Collection, Inc.

Principal Financial Group
NorthWestern Energy
St. Francis Medical Center
Tom Dinsdale Automotive

Red Carpet Customer Service Training

Grand Island will soon experience an influx of visitors with summer baseball and softball tournaments, live entertainment, family reunions and of course the Nebraska State Fair! Visitors are customers and customers who have a pleasant purchasing experience are more likely to become repeat buyers. These people will share their buying experiences with family, friends and co-workers. Extraordinary customer service is the starting point and a defining element in **all** purchasing transactions. How are you planning to provide outstanding service? Let's get started!

Quality customer service is essential to the success of your business and your customers' satisfaction. The Grand Island Chamber of Commerce is committed to providing training on customer service as much as we can and as often as we can to ensure all companies have the opportunity to hone their employees' skills in this area. In April, a four-hour training session was offered to Chamber partners; key points covered include: remembering that customers are the reason we are employed; the customer is not always right but he/she is always the customer; and ultimately, how to cultivate an environment where customers leave happy. The session was 'sold out' but will be repeated in June and July and is again available to Chamber businesses at no charge. We are also developing a new four-hour training 'module' that builds on existing basic skills. Be watching for more information on this training.

Additionally, the Chamber is offering a very basic on-line training module – Red Carpet Service. While this interactive, self-paced training, developed by the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative, is geared toward the hospitality industry, many elements are applicable to any business. The training offers inside details on all elements of executing stellar customer service, including.

- â-i Identifying ways all jobs relate to visitors
- â-i Discovering the secrets of S.E.R.V.I.C.E
- â-i Learning how to master the "mirror effect"
- â-i Communicating clearly and concisely with those unfamiliar with our community

Check out the Red Carpet Service on –line training at <http://redcarpetonline.unl.edu/>

Click on "First time users click here" (yellow bar on the right hand side).

A "Red Carpet Service New Registration" screen will appear. Go to the Red Carpet Site Name drop down menu. Select GI Chamber.

The Site Access Code for the GI Chamber is **gich10**. Enter this code in the appropriate box.

Enter name and email address.

Click on "Post".

Your personal access ID will appear on the next screen. WRITE DOWN YOUR PERSONAL ACCESS ID#; it will not be available elsewhere.

Type your Access ID into the box at the lower left.

On the drop-down menu, select "GI Chamber".

Click "continue".

You are on the Learning Trail!



Celebrating 25 Years!

Leadership Tomorrow is celebrating the graduation of LT Class 24 and announcing the selection of Class 25 on Wednesday, June 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at the Mid-Town Holiday Inn in the Grand Royal Ballroom. This is a very exciting time for the program, as we now have over 500 alumni out there making a difference in the community. The alumni is invited to join us in this grand event. LT Alumni of the Year and Outstanding Program support awards will be presented that evening.

LT Golf Outing

Leadership Tomorrow is hosting the 11th Annual LT Golf Outing on Wednesday, June 16th at Centura Hills Golf Course. This event is open to everyone and is a wonderful way to provide additional funds needed for the programs. This year we have added some new things and you won't want to miss it!

Duck Derby

The 8th Annual Duck Derby sponsored by Tom Dinsdale Chevy, Cadillac, GMC, BMW & Hyundai and presented by the G.I. Independent is scheduled for August 14th at Island Oasis. In addition, don't forget 'Dine with the Ducks' the night before at Dinsdale Automotive. 'Dine with the Ducks' is a free event that provides family fun, dinner and a last minute opportunity for Duck Adoptions!

New Chamber Partners

April 2010

Absolute Construction
Jason Veeder
316 East Capital Avenue
Grand Island, NE 68801
308.390.1765

The Chocolate Bar
Sharena Anson
118 West 3rd Street
PO Box 1665
Grand Island, NE 68802
308.227.1155

First Holiday Tour and Travel, Inc.
Mick Brown
1932 Aspen Circle
Suite-A
Grand Island, NE 68803
308.384.1800

Janitor, Inc.
Janet and Eric Christensen
2900 Lakepark Lane
Hastings, NE 68901
402.463.7622

Prairie Creek Vineyards
Nick and Kristen Ryan
2254 13th Road
Central City, NE 68826
308.940.1370

Silk Flower Keepsakes
Tara Keenan
2405 22nd Avenue
Central City, NE 68826
308.947.7778

The Sprinkler Guy
Tim Bennett
616 Ravenwood Drive
Grand Island, NE 68801
308.381.7625

Treasure Aisle
2250 North Webb Road
Suite F19

Grand Island, NE 68803
308.675.1500

Individual Chamber Partners for April

Casey Carpenter

309 West 2nd Street | PO Box 1486 | Grand Island, NE 68802-1486
Phone: 308.382.9210 | Fax: 308.382.1154

This email was sent to **sarnold@gichamber.com**. To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) using TrueRemove®.

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

email marketing by [Marathon Press](#)