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# Direction for Business

December 2010

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## 2010, A Banner Year

*A Message from your Chamber President*

2010 was a banner year! After working feverishly to recruit the Nebraska State Fair to our community, Grand Island residents and businesses continued their efforts to ensure Grand Island was spruced up, welcoming, and ready to help make the first Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island a success! Thank you to all who participated.

Grand Island is now in a league of its own outside of Omaha and Lincoln. With over 875,000 square feet of meeting, event and exhibit space, no other community in Nebraska or the mid-west region can provide the quality trade show and convention experiences available in Grand Island. With the ideal mix of lodging, shopping, restaurants and other amenities which make us the premiere destination in a multi-state region, Grand Island has a tremendous opportunity. Impressed attendees at the Nebraska State Fair are creating a buzz which is resonating throughout the trade and livestock shows and conventions. Given that these organizations, like many businesses, have been negatively impacted by the recent economic recession, this level of interest is remarkable.

It is clear that tough economic conditions prompted businesses to re-examine their business model. Long held practices have been refined and redeveloped. Redundancies and inefficiencies have been being identified and eliminated. This analytical process has driven businesses to re-think their operations, including conventions and trade shows. A 'new normal' has replaced traditional 'assumptions' and 'givens' and, in the process, has created opportunities for Grand Island. How? Historically, conventions and trade shows have been recognized as 'loss leaders' - meeting attendees and trade show participants fill hotel rooms, eat and shop at local establishments, and obtain other services thereby generating economic activity. Recognizing this trickle-down effect, some local governments have subsidized convention center operations. But decreased government revenues mean difficult funding decisions and, in some communities, fewer dollars have been allocated for this purpose. Thus, recruiting may become more challenging for these communities.

Lisa Willman

This is not the case in Grand Island. The Heartland Events Center and the \$42 million of infrastructure at the Fonner Park Complex constructed for the Nebraska State Fair do not depend on general tax funds from local government to offset operational expenses. Grand Island's recruiting position, as a result, is stronger and differentiates us from our competitors. Furthermore, partnerships within the community positively and creatively enhance our efforts to secure events. And, Grand Island's "Can Do" spirit and innovation have certainly played, and will continue to play, important roles in these promotional endeavors. As exhibited at the Nebraska State Fair and State Volleyball Tournament, one of Grand Island's 'competitive advantages' – our volunteers – provided the hospitality and friendliness which ensured visitors to our community had a memorable experience.

As Grand Island advances our competitive position as an aggressive business, manufacturing, medical services, and destination city, the elevation and enhancement of our collective marketing efforts must be maximized in order to secure trade shows and events. For Grand Island, this could very well become the 'new normal' and the way to realize our full potential.



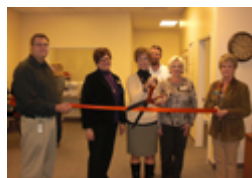
Maximus Car Audio & Rims celebrated their new Chamber partnership with a ribbon cutting on November 5, 2010.



Sanchez Plaza Restaurant & Bakery invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting on November 5, 2010 to celebrate their new Chamber partnership.



Viaero Wireless Business After Hours, November 11, 2010.



Advance Workforce Solutions celebrated their new office location with a ribbon cutting on November 12, 2010.



Closet Savvy invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting on November 12, 2010 to celebrate their new Chamber partnership.



Essential Personnel celebrate their office relocation with a ribbon cutting on November 19, 2010.

## Save the Date! 2011 Chamber Annual Meeting

The Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting will be held **Thursday, March 31st, 2011**, beginning with a social hour at 5:30 p.m., at the Heartland Event Center. The Chamber's annual gala is Grand Island's premier business event and is expected to draw close to 600 Chamber and community partners, local and state dignitaries. Our speaker this year is Curt Tomasevicz, Olympic gold medalist in bobsledding! Get ready for an inspiring presentation!

The evening will also feature presentation of the Chamber's annual awards. To nominate an individual or company in recognition for their commitment to their community, please contact Micki Ward, Events and Communications Coordinator, 382.9210 or [mward@qichamber.com](mailto:mward@qichamber.com).

Sponsorships for the evening are also being sought. **There are two levels of sponsorship** – an event sponsor (\$2,000) and an auction sponsor (\$1,000). If you would like more information on ways to participate in developing the evening's activities, please contact Micki.

### **Annual Meeting** - Meeting Sponsors \$2,000

The evening includes recognition of outstanding area businesses, an annual report, and a well known keynote speaker who provides relevant insight into successful business operations.

- Recognition in front of 550 - 600 business attendees
- 4 complimentary tickets to the banquet and program
- Personnel introduced by the emcee
- 3' x 5' banner, your full-color logo, hanging adjacent to the stage
- Business profile printed in the program and Direction for Business newsletter
- Picture of the company CEO in Direction for Business newsletter
- Photo session for your personnel with the keynote speaker
- Your company name in all advertisements and printed invitations to members

### **Auction Sponsors** - 8-10 available \$1,000 or \$1,000 value of donation

- Prizes should have universal, mass appeal.
- Introduction by emcee of your company.
- Logo printed in the program and in the Chamber's Direction for Business newsletter.
- Company logo in Annual Meeting PowerPoint Presentation.
- Company recognition in Annual Meeting advertisements, press releases and printed invitations to Chamber partners.

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## Nebraska Danger!

The Grand Island Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce a partnership with Nebraska Danger, Grand Island's new indoor football league team! The Chamber is taking part in kicking off the Danger season on March 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. against Wichita.

Tickets can be purchased through the Chamber for \$15 with a portion of the ticket sale proceeds going to help fund the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce programs. Tickets can be purchased from January 24<sup>th</sup> through February 4<sup>th</sup> at the Chamber office on 309 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. If you would like to be added to a reserved ticket list before then, please call the Chamber office at 382-9210. We will contact you when tickets are available for pick up.

As a bonus for purchasing your ticket with us, we invite you to be part of our "fan tunnel" for the Danger players as they take the field for the first time ever! And if that is not enough excitement for you, the Chamber is also putting together two dodge ball teams to play at half time. We already have our team captains, but can always use more players! Just call, email or stop in to sign up for a team. GO DANGER!

## Board Farewell

This time of year I find myself thinking along the lines of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" as visions of the State Fair, State Volleyball, Can Do Committees and the continued success of the business community all dance in my head. But it changes quickly as the visions are replaced by the work that remains. As outgoing Board Chair, I can only really thank you all for the ride that was known



as 2010! So to the Chamber Partners and their employees, the Chamber Staff and Board, the associates at Nebraska Truck Center who made my time possible, and to all the people of Grand Island - Congratulations and thank you! This year's accomplishments were not possible without you!

My hope is that we can continue the momentum, efforts and results that made this past year the monumental one it was for this town. We are certainly on a roll, but we cannot sit back and relax,

because the work is not done. We still need to continue the successes of this past year as well as look forward to the events and successes yet to come. The Chamber will continue its work to improve the business community in Grand Island by working in areas like the Career Technical Learning Center, governmental affairs, and considering the goals and objectives set forth in a report (Battelle) released by the State EDC. Membership in your Chamber has never been more valuable than it is right now.

So "a Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!" as you enjoy the holiday season with family and friends! Celebrate the year of 2010 that was so special to Grand Island! But get ready to roll up your sleeves once again as we begin the New Year and continue the new era of Grand Island!

-Kent Brown

## Chamber Bucks

If you are in need of gifts for employee recognition or bonuses, consider Chamber Bucks. Chamber Bucks can be used at any Grand Island business and are accepted/processed just like a check. Using Chamber Bucks encourages employees to 'buy locally'. Recipients have, in the past, used Chamber Bucks at retail stores, gas stations, and even to pay their utility bills! Contact Shelley at the Chamber for more information.

## New Chamber Partners

*December 2010*

NAPA/Tagart Auto Supply

Mike Tagart  
2908 Old Fair Road  
PO Box 880  
Grand Island, NE 68802  
308.384.5120

Nebraska Danger Indoor Football Team  
Mike McCoy  
3123 West Stolley Park Road  
PO Box 1567  
Grand Island, NE 68802  
308.381.2800

Physicians Immediate Care  
Sabrina Dickey  
727 North Custer Avenue  
Grand Island, NE 68803  
308.389.3278

Pretty Pies and Pastries  
Summer Labenz  
1112 West 12th Street  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
308.383.4743

The Teacher's Lounge  
Dawnita Buck  
1504 South Locust Street  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
308.398.7010

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

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