
FUTUREFORCE

NEBRASKA

Prepare today for a dynamic future.

PATHWAYS

Volume 2, Issue 2

March 2007



Upcoming Events

April 2 Northeast Community College Pneumatics Workshop
Lifelong Learning Center – 9 am

April 19 FutureForce Executive Board Meeting
Bellevue Lincoln Campus – 10 am
FutureForce Steering Committee Meeting
Bellevue Lincoln Campus – 12 pm

April 20 FutureForce Finance Meeting
AAA Omaha – 9 am
Metro Community College Career Fair
Metro Community College South – 8 am

Pathway Committees

Biotech

15 students are currently enrolled in a co-developed, online course, Biotechnology: Food, Health and Environment. Half the students are from UNL and the other half are Omaha North students.

A workshop on the UNL campus will be delivered this summer to Agriculture and Science teachers at both the secondary and community college levels. The workshop will combine visits to UNL biotechnology research labs, greenhouses and fields, a visit to or with biotechnology industry and customized activities developed as lessons during the past year. The proposed Biotechnology Pathway model described, discussed and assessed for potential use in the classroom.

Finance

FutureForce Finance held its first meeting February 23 at the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. FutureForce Finance will simultaneously address all five pathways of the Finance Cluster—Accounting, Banking, Corporate Finance, Insurance, and

Securities and Investments. At the meeting, Tom Chapman reported on research recently completed for the Insurance Pathway and Bonnie Sibert introduced the careerconnections website, noting that Finance has been identified as one of the top three areas of interest among youth. A day long meeting is scheduled on June 22nd to map out necessary skills for each pathway. The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be April 20th at AAA in Omaha.

NET Force

The first annual Entrepreneurship Week was held February 24th – March 3rd. Activities were held across the state. Highlights include:

- Opening of the Southeast Community College Center for Entrepreneurship
- Marketplace Conference in Kearney featuring exhibits, keynote sessions and teach-in sessions
- Entrepreneurship Fairs in Columbus, Hastings, & Scottsbluff
- New Ventures World Competition in Lincoln for youth
- Special Entrepreneurship Education Leadership & Advocacy Award presented to Representative Tom Osborne.
- Ben Nelson introduced legislation to provide financial and technical assistance to micro-enterprises and entrepreneurs in rural areas.

TWD&L

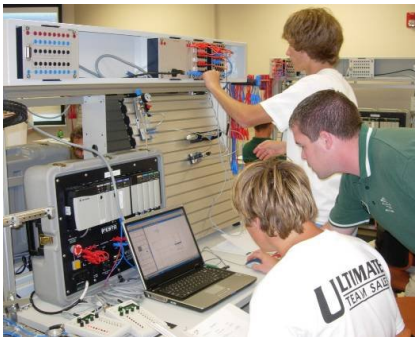
Larry Johnson, Tom Bartell, Kelly Christensen, Tony Glenn, Ron Kluck, and Bill Hitesman attended a workshop in Arlington, Texas in mid-February to expand or develop a partnership model expanding on the Transportation Grant between Mid-Plaines and Central Community College. They

will be presenting information on March 22nd to the local ESU #9 and next week to the National Associate of Publicly Funded Truck Driving Schools in Orlando, Florida

Industrial Manufacturing/Engineering

In the Industrial Manufacturing and Engineering Systems pathway, Central Community College and Northeast Community College are collaborating for the second consecutive year to offer workshops for high school and college faculty and students. Last summer, high school faculty and students learned about advanced manufacturing processes in a Mechatronics or electromechanical systems. The workshop participants worked with electrical, mechanical, and computer technologies associated with those systems in one-day awareness workshops at Central's Manufacturing Learning Laboratory.

This year, working with the Mechatronics Education Center, based out of Central Community College in Columbus, educators are also able to participate in pneumatics and electrical training. As an additional benefit, schools are able to "check-out" pneumatics and electrical lab kits to introduce the skills into their classrooms. The educators may participate in workshops either at Central or Northeast and then have the opportunity to "check-out" the same equipment for use back in their schools.



High school students build an electropneumatic circuit in a FutureForce Nebraska workshop with assistance from Mechatronics Education Center Trainer Allen Stenzel.

Other News

The Third Annual Career/College Fair will be held at the Metro Community College South Campus on Friday April 20th, 2007 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. The fair is intended to expose seventh-grade students to careers they might not otherwise consider. In an attempt to provide representation from a variety of career cluster areas, the hope is

to include presenters from the environmental, educational, agricultural, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, and construction industries. Each participant is asked to provide an exploratory session for seventh-grade students that lasts approximately twenty-minutes, and that would repeat for subsequent sessions throughout the day. The session should convey an understanding of the nature of that particular business, or educational path. The emphasis should be on having a display with some type of hands-on activity and/or an interactive program that will engage those at a seventh-grade level.

Last year, there were approximately one-thousand seventh-grade students who attended the fair. School participation will be doubled this year; therefore, the goal is to have approximately fifty organizations involved as session participants. It is an excellent opportunity to promote your business and to meet students who may be part of the future workforce.

If you would like further information regarding the fair, please contact LeeAnn Vaughan.

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Director Update

March has been a busy month for FutureForce Nebraska and I would like to update you on a few key items.

State Scholars (Think Nebraska!)

On February 28, we met with the pilot schools participating in the State Scholars Initiative. The pilot schools are each implementing different strategies, including direct meetings with students and parents to explain the importance of rigor and relevance in student course work. Connections continue to be made with partners in the business community as this program moves forward.

We are currently working through a few curriculum issues, especially in the area of Social Studies. On the national level, State Scholars requires one year of geography. Several of our pilot schools, along with other schools in Nebraska do not offer a stand alone program in geography but integrate it throughout other Social Studies courses. We will continue to work on this issue ensuring our main priority remains

what is best for Nebraska students.

On April 4th, we have secured a spot on the State Board of Education agenda to inform them about Think Nebraska! and the State Scholars Initiative. Representatives from our pilot schools will be making presentations.

Career Pathways

As you have seen earlier in this publication, the career pathway committees are active and working. A date of importance for our pathway committees is June 30th, which is the date grant funds allocated through FutureForce must be expended.

While these funds provided a substantial start to the work of each committee, we need to be aware of opportunities for the future. Along that line, FutureForce Nebraska has partnered with an effort led by Tony Raimondo, CEO of Behlen Manufacturing and Dwayne Probyn, Nebraska Advanced Manufacturing Coalition, to secure two, federal Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grants for Nebraska. Each grant is worth 5 million dollars. The two regional areas identified by the grants are the western half and eastern half of Nebraska as defined by the following community college boundaries: Western Nebraska Community College and Mid-Plains Community College in the west; North East Community College, Southeast Community College, Central Community College and Metro Community College in the east. The grant focuses on the following career pathways: Western Region – Health Science, TDWL, and Value Added Agriculture. Eastern Region - Health Sciences, Industrial Manufacturing, TDWL, and Entrepreneurship.

WIRED grants must be submitted via the Governor's office. The approval to proceed with this grant effort was given by the Governor in mid-March. The federal submission deadline is April 13th but April 6th has been established as the deadline to submit the proposal to Governor Heineman for final review and approval. It has been a fast paced effort and final touches are being put on grant proposals at this time. Results should be known sometime in June.

Biotech Grant

FutureForce Nebraska in cooperation with BIONebraska took a lead role in pursuing one of two \$25,000 grants sponsored by the Biotechnology Industry Organization and MERK. Eleven states

were in competition for the two grants. Nebraska and Illinois were selected as recipients. The proposal put forth by FutureForce and BIONebraska will encourage the Nebraska Unicameral to establish a statewide bioscience week, involve schools in a competitive, hands-on bioscience competition and increase awareness of careers in biotechnology. I would like to take this time to personally thank Trish Souliere, FutureForce Program Coordinator, for her excellent work in writing the proposal and Julie Karavas, President of BIONebraska for alignment of supporting groups.

FutureForce Website

As most of you know, the FutureForce website has been down for several months. We should be on our way to solving that issue. We have selected a Lincoln based firm to help re-design the website. Our goal is for the FutureForce website to eventually become a "one stop" center that provides and links people to information relating to developing a skilled labor force, educational planning, career awareness, etc. Creating this type of "one-stop" site will take time however we plan on having basic components ready for use by our April 19th Board and Steering committee meetings.

Non-Profit Status

On March 9th, Jim Linderholm, Dean Folkers, Marshall Hill and I met with Jeff Yost of the Nebraska Community Foundation to explore the benefits of affiliating with NCF. It was a very productive meeting. We have invited Jeff to attend the April 19th meeting to provide more information on the process and benefits of affiliating with NCF.

NE Research & Innovations Conference

Thanks to Pete Kotsiopoulos for inviting FutureForce Nebraska to take part in and present at this annual EPSCOR sponsored conference. It was an enlightening day with "collaboration" as a theme that was interwoven in many of the presentations.

Collaboration is not something new to Nebraska. It is foundational to our heritage. The pioneers in our state understood the importance of working together for the common good. FutureForce Nebraska will continue this spirit of collaboration as we move Nebraska towards a stronger economic future.

Randy Vlasin
Executive Director
FutureForce Nebraska