



## FutureForce Nebraska

# Pathways

-- Linking resources for Nebraska's Future

## Talent Pipeline Update

### Biotech

The final event for the middle school bioscience contest has been scheduled for February 20 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's East Campus. The day will include final judging, hands on biotech workshops for participating students, a special keynote speaker from the Omaha Zoo's Madagascar project, Susie McGuire presenting "Conservation in Madagascar: Saving the World One Species at a Time.", and an awards ceremony.

### Entrepreneurship

The Entrepreneurship Pathway is always teeming with great events and exciting activities. At the last pathway meeting, the curriculum committee reported back on their recommendations for adjustments to be made to the original six course entrepreneurship program developed previously by the pathway committee. The program is being used in colleges and community colleges across the state. Also discussed at the meeting was a new career cluster model previously endorsed by the Entrepreneurship Pathway that graphically represents the cross-cluster nature of entrepreneurship.

The fourth week of February heralds the arrival of National Entrepreneurship Week and with it a host of exciting activities across the state. Back by popular demand is UNL's video conference and webcast "Mentoring by the Masters", the Center for Rural Affairs Marketplace Conference, and the 2008 Summit on Entrepreneurship at the Qwest Center.

### Finance

The Finance Committee continued to build on its early momentum during a January meeting in Omaha to discuss possible next steps. Business/industry & educational representatives spent the most of the morning working in pathway groups to identify and implement FutureForce Finance goals and activities for 2008.

Anyone not present at the January meeting is encouraged to volunteer to help with any of the planned activities. Contact Bonnie Sibert or another member of FutureForce Finance.



One of the activities identified by FutureForce Finance was development of job shadowing/internship opportunities for teachers. In response, Doane College will be offering a graduate-level course for teachers focusing on the Finance Career Cluster some time in June or July. Businesses interested in hosting a small group of teachers for 2-3 hours for an onsite internship should contact Bonnie Sibert immediately at [bonnie.sibert@nde.ne.gov](mailto:bonnie.sibert@nde.ne.gov). Please provide a contact name, phone number and email address.

### TDWL

The future TDWL workforce may get a boost from the innovative ideas floating around the halls of Bryan Senior High School in Omaha, Nebraska. Bryan High is in the process of changing its Industrial Technology Education curriculum from a traditional program to a comprehensive TDWL program for all of its high school students. The move is the result of research identifying the need for a new curriculum to focus students on this career cluster, full of high-demand, high-wage jobs.

The wheels of change are already in motion. A community curriculum meeting was on Friday, January 11, 2008, hosted by the Bryan High Industrial Technology Department. Bryan High will be rolling out its first class, Foundations of TDWL, to all ninth grade students this fall. If you are interested in this new program and would like some information or could assist Bryan High with this endeavor, please contact Mike Rogers at (402) 557-3155 or [mike.rogers@ops.org](mailto:mike.rogers@ops.org).

### Nebraska In the News

Governor Heineman and the Department of Economic Development landed a prime spot in the January 2008 issue of Industrial Asset Management Council's (IAMC) monthly newsletter. The Governor's commitment to economic development along with reasonable wages and great incentives have ranked Nebraska as one of the top two locations in the country for corporate expansion projects. When asked to name Nebraska's number one asset, he was quick to give all the credit to Nebraska's people. "Our No. 1 business climate factor is our work force," he said. "We have a great work ethic and worker productivity. Nebraskans don't look at their jobs as 8 to 5. We are team-oriented and goal-focused." The full article can be found here.

<http://www.iamc.org/dispatch/0801/pg01.shtml>



### Grand Island Makes the Top 100 List for Young People

What do Grand Island, New York City, St. Paul, Minnesota, & Burbank, California have in common? All four cities were recently ranked among the 100 Best Communities for Young People in the United States, an award bestowed by America's Promise Alliance. "This is a very, very significant award," said Jeff Pederson, Grand Island city administrator. Pederson went on to add that the city earned the distinctive honor as a result of significant community contributions to create and maintain a healthy community for young people from birth to graduation. (Grand Island Independent)

### Bill Aims to Retain Top Scholars

Nebraska legislators are turning their attention toward retaining the state's best and brightest youth with the introduction of LB 1013. Based on the idea that if students stay in Nebraska for college, they will be more likely to settle down here afterwards, State Senator Tim Gay of Papillion is proposing to offer a \$2,000 annual scholarship to each Nebraska high school student whose score on the ACT college entrance exam places them among the top 5%. The scholarships would be eligible for use at any of the state's public or private colleges and universities and could be renewed for up to four years if recipient maintains a 3.5 grade-point average. (Omaha World Herald)



## Upcoming Events

- February 18-22** National Career & Tech Ed Month
- February 20** Nebraska Bioscience Week
- February 20** Middle School Bioscience Contest
- February 27** MarketPlace Conference - Columbus
- February 28** 2008 Entrepreneurship Summit



# Director's Corner

*"Imagine the four pillars as the pieces of an automobile. We have tested those pieces over the past year and now we want to connect them to create our automobile and put wheels on it to move this vehicle forward."*

I hope your new year is off to a great start and filled with exciting opportunities. FutureForce brought 2007 to a close by evaluating existing activities and exploring new opportunities. On December 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> nearly 80 individuals representing state & local workforce development, Department of Labor, Department of Economic Development, Department of Education, K-12 educators, postsecondary education, community based organizations and a cross section of employers from around the state gathered in Lincoln to participate in the FutureForce Strategy and Design session. The group spent two days evaluating the overall purpose of FutureForce and developing direction for our programs. From that work, several key areas emerged.

### Sustainability

FutureForce Nebraska has been dependent on support from grant funds to accomplish its work. However, we know that is not a path that leads to long-term stability. We must demonstrate the value of FutureForce and create opportunities that attract interest and support from both private and public sectors. We have established necessary pieces that will help to expand the talent pool for targeted industries with high demand for high skill, high wage jobs. Each of our four initiatives, Talent Pipeline, Think! Nebraska, Nebraska Career Connections and Partnerships for Innovation provide unique, interrelated support for developing Nebraska's talent pool.

### Marketing & Communication

After nearly four years, FutureForce Nebraska remains relatively unknown to a majority of Nebraskans. Our success depends on changing that fact. However, for this change to occur we must

demonstrate our value. The first step is to clearly define our message and help those closest to FutureForce fully understand it. At that point, we will be able to effectively address the public on a larger scale.

### FutureForce Initiatives

#### Talent Pipeline

Create an effective system of operations for our talent pipeline that includes a pathway template for uniform implementation, increases communication between the pathways and helps to identify "industry champions" who will lead pathway efforts and facilitate communication of the results to our partners and the general public.

#### Think! Nebraska Scholars

Create a program that increases college and workforce readiness for all students. This must include a rigorous and relevant course of study that provides more than one path to becoming a state scholar and more importantly develops those skills necessary for students to create a successful future.

#### Nebraska Career Connections

Continue to develop and enhance this online education and career planning tool to include a broader audience, including adult job seekers. NCC is an excellent tool for anyone to use in planning a career track. The information it currently generates is of great value not only to students and career seekers, but to educators and the business community as well. We must continue to market this tool to the both the education and business sectors of our state. ***If you have not visited this website, I encourage you to do so.*** There is a new "adult" login available so you can have

access to all the features students currently do, including the Kuder Skills and Interest assessments.

- Simply go to:

[www.nebraskacareerconnections.org](http://www.nebraskacareerconnections.org)

- Select "Sign up for your account."

- Choose Adult Job Seeker

You will be given instructions to complete registration. After that you will have full access to what NCC has to offer. Enjoy!

#### Partnerships For Innovation

This newly formed consortium will have a major impact on creating successful secondary to postsecondary transition for students. PFI also has the tasks of creating technical skill assessment of students, designing professional development programs for secondary and postsecondary educators, addressing dual credit issues, developing curriculum in emerging areas and improving data reporting systems. These efforts will have a direct impact on the other three initiatives.

(If you would like to see more of the work created at the Strategy and Design session, go to the following link:

<http://www.innovationlabs.com/futureforce/>

This all seems a bit daunting and somewhat difficult to achieve. However, as Albert Einstein said, "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." Its time to grasp the opportunities!

Randy Vlasin  
Executive Director  
FutureForce Nebraska

## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & NEBRASKA'S FUTURE:

Dennis Jones  
Evaluates Nebraska



At the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's December 5, 2007 forum, *Postsecondary Education and Nebraska's Future*, Dennis Jones, president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, presented detailed data and analysis of higher education attainment among Nebraska's residents.

From an overall perspective, Jones stated that Nebraska is doing well in regards to higher education attainment in that Nebraska students are graduating from high school and college at higher rates than the national average. Nebraskans are also graduating from postsecondary institutions at a higher rate. However, he said, there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Jones' data indicated that Nebraskans should focus on improving Nebraska's economic development climate. He said Nebraska should encourage more higher-paying industries to settle in Nebraska and employ Nebraskans with degrees in order to keep those individuals within the state. Jones said this message needed to be emphasized not just in Lincoln and Omaha but across the state.

In addition, Jones' analysis emphasized that it was important to focus on higher education because increased educational attainment leads to increased income (i.e. tax revenue) and increased economic strength. Among other benefits, increased educational attainment also supports better health and increased employment in the arts, leading to an improved and more culturally diverse population.

The full presentation can be found here <http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/CPE/12.05.07Presentations/default.asp>



*In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN