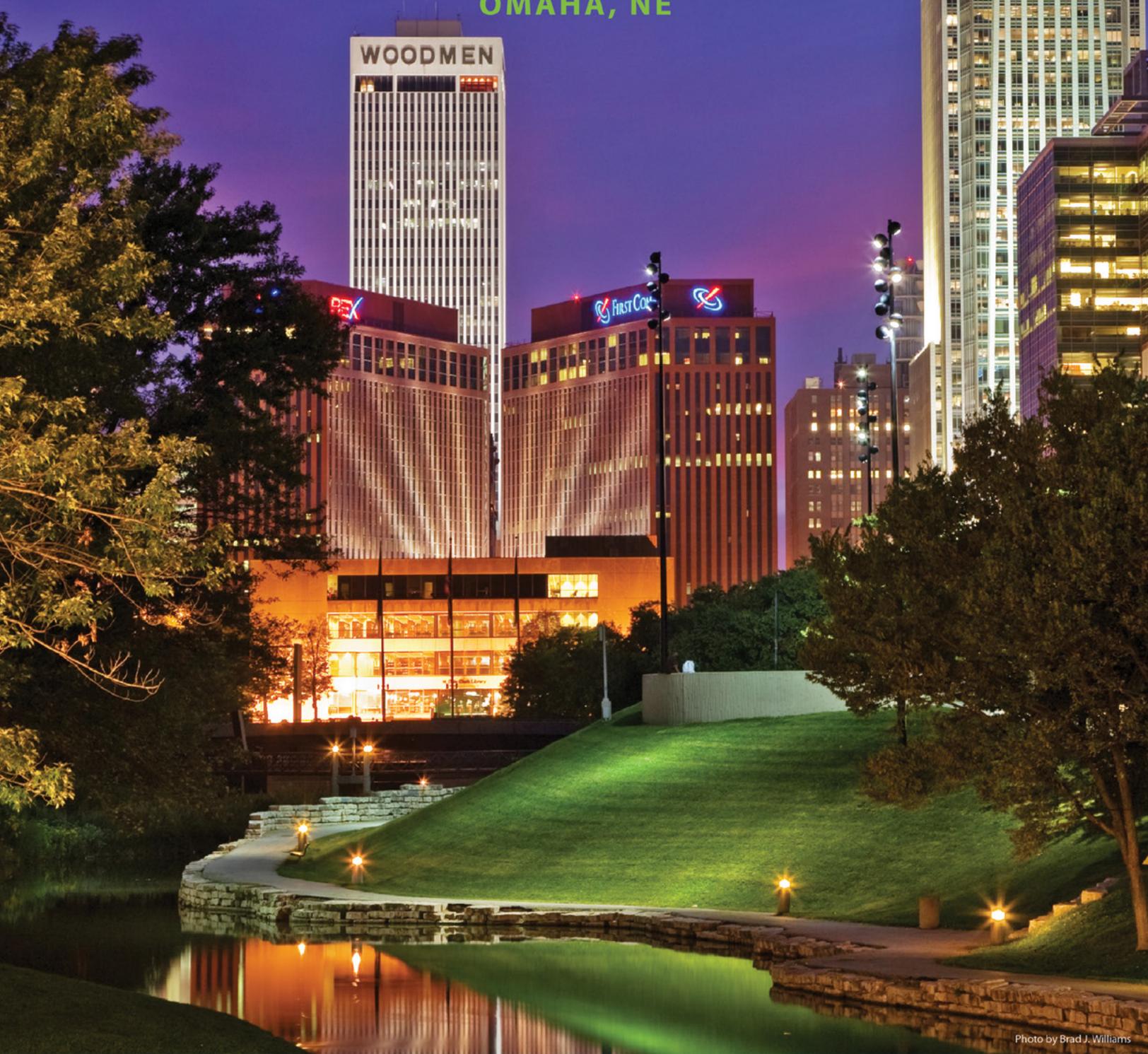


2014 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP VISIT

OMAHA, NE



"I believe Omaha is on the cusp of something spectacular. We have the right leadership in place and the timing is right with the momentum to move forward. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence in Omaha in every area."

David Brown
President/CEO of Greater Omaha Chamber

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INTRODUCTION



Three days, 10 panel discussions, 43 guest speakers, and 168 tweets later, 61 of Springfield's business and community leaders learned the ins-and-outs of what makes Omaha a city of big ideas, big dollars and "no coasting."

On the Chamber's 21st Community Leadership Visit last October, the Springfield delegation heard from a community who is ready to be seen as "work here, live here, play here" country; a community that wants to be known for world class museums and cultural facilities rather than empty prairies; a community that wants the reputation of their homegrown entrepreneurs to outweigh the reputation of their steaks. Omaha is a community who has worked to identify who they are – why they are strong, and why you don't want to miss being a part of it.

Greater Omaha is home to 880,000 people, five fortune 500 companies, 10 fortune 1000 companies, the nation's top zoo, the NCAA Men's College World Series and a top medical center in the heart of the Midwest. With lots of exciting things happening in this city and a well-

orchestrated effort to get the word out about what is happening, it is clear that Omaha is no longer content with the distinction of "flyover country."

Progress in Omaha is evident throughout the city, but particularly on the downtown riverfront. Previously home to lead smelting plants, battery plants, and scrap metal dealers, visionary leaders from the public and private sector aggressively worked with the federal government and EPA and private developers to transform the riverfront and return it to its beautiful roots. The area is now home to ConAgra headquarters, and is a downtown destination. The City now enjoys riverfront walking and bike trails, the Bob Kerry Pedestrian Bridge and a riverfront park that hosts musical festivals throughout the year. At the heart of this transformation is a commitment to continuing to improve the community through economic development.

Some tangible takeaways that resonated with the Springfield delegation were Omaha's strategic approach to workforce development, their efforts surrounding entrepreneurship and the business community's level of philanthropic support.

DEVELOPING A WORKFORCE TODAY TO FILL JOBS OF TOMORROW

If the Springfield delegation walked away with one unified message from Omaha, it would be the imminent need for strategic, innovative approaches to developing a talented workforce. Not only have Omaha's leaders identified the problem, they have identified the necessary steps to take to positively impact workforce development.

The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce has been a key player in convening all the partners involved in Omaha's workforce efforts, so much so, that workforce development is a key component of the Chamber's "Prosper Omaha"

effort— a five year, \$23 million dollar initiative to generate 12,000 new jobs and ultimately result in a projected \$3 billion impact on the area.

Driving all of their workforce efforts is data. The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce has spent significant resources collecting data to define workforce challenges and shape viable solutions. As Wendy Boyer, senior vice president of the Omaha Chamber, put it, "Data is helping inform everything that we do, and it is challenging how we apply our resources. Data is helping us plan for the future and prevent problems before they become problems."

Their data collection identified three challenges as it relates to the workforce:

1

Number of people

They don't have enough people living and working in Greater Omaha to support or sustain the accelerated economic growth they envision.

2

Specific talent

They don't have the needed talent with the specific skill sets and experience necessary to sustain the current and future economy.

3

Poverty, education, and employment

They have areas of high poverty, low educational attainment and at near full employment in Greater Omaha.

With these three challenges at the forefront of the workforce effort, Omaha has come up with specific solutions to combat these problems. They have a strategic effort to grow high skilled jobs and bring talent to Omaha.

WE DON'T COAST™



“We Don't Coast” – A Powerful Branding Campaign

Full of energy and passion, Omaha’s creative and business leaders came together to change the way the rest of the country views their region. Hundreds of people spent several months in an organic, grassroots effort to develop a regional brand that captures why Greater Omaha is such a wonderful place to live, to work and to run a business. The resulting unified branding campaign, www.wedontcoast.com, celebrates everything that Omaha is—innovative, diverse, affordable, and active. The initiative doesn’t apologize for their central, Midwest location, but instead owns their position in the middle of the country as an asset, an intentional choice; hence the branding campaign’s tagline “We Don't Coast.”

Innovative workforce solutions to address community challenges

The Springfield delegation learned about Heartland Workforce Solutions (HWS), a non-profit organization housed in a state of the art center that brings together 17 agencies from the private and public sectors. Their goal: to help job seekers prepare for employment, and to help businesses find qualified candidates.

Given the shortage of available workers and the rising poverty rates, there is a particular emphasis on equipping those in poverty with the job skills necessary to match up with available job opportunities. To make these connections, HWS provides support, assistance, training and educational opportunities for job seekers and businesses. "Nothing stops a bullet like a job," Erin Porterfield, executive director of Heartland Workforce Solutions said.

While all communities have some form of Workforce Investment Board (WIB), what's unique about Omaha is the Chamber-led effort to reconstitute the organization's structure to a 501c3 in order to allow more flexibility and collaboration, rather than being tied to federal requirements and restrictions. Their non-profit status allows them to be nimble and responsive, just like the needs of the modern economy.

"When we became a non-profit, that was a game changer. It allowed us to be creative to get where we want to go rather than asking how I can get somewhere without breaking a rule," Porterfield said.

"We are a catalyst, working from a place of influence to convene partners and execute plans."

Wendy Boyer
Sr. Vice President
Omaha Chamber



Changing the perception of IT in schools

The Peter Kiewit Institute (PKI) on the University of Nebraska Campus is a major player in everything Omaha is doing to develop talent, but especially in addressing the shortage of IT professionals.

“The shortage of IT is significant and it is going to determine the ability of companies to grow, thrive and compete in the years ahead,” Dr. Hesham Ali, Dean of the College of Information Science and Technology at the University of Omaha said.

To find a solution to this shortage, PKI is working to connect with K-12 students and change the notion of computing in schools. They are creating a Technology Ecosystem that attracts students into the field and connects them with job opportunities. According to Dr. Ali, a major part of this effort is helping students realize that no matter what they are passionate about, whether it’s art, business or healthcare, they should pursue it while recognizing there are IT opportunities within those fields.

The institute is also focused on attracting young women into the field through scholarships and a five-day on campus experience to learn about IT fields and careers.

“To succeed, we need to change the dynamics of the K-12 pipeline,” Dr. Deepak Khanzanchi, professor and associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Information Science and Technology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha said.

To do this, PKI has developed an educator internship program that gives teachers the opportunity to experience different workplaces. In doing so, the program gives companies indirect access to the future workforce and makes IT advocates out of teachers.



The depth of business engagement from Omaha’s largest companies was impressive. Omaha greatly benefits from numerous national companies getting deeply involved in local initiatives and on-going economic development.”

Jeff Schrag
Owner, The Daily Events/Mothers Brewing Co.



Engaging Young Professionals

A central element of Omaha's workforce strategy is their active and engaged young professional program, whose goal is to help attract and retain young professionals through community and civic engagement.

One unique component of the Greater Omaha Young Professionals program is the Council of Companies, which serves as a support group for companies to start and sustain internal young professional and employee resource groups. Created in 2008, they now have 36 participating companies and offer six professional development meetings per year.

Another primary function of the YP group has been to help Omaha's young professionals advocate for key issues that they are personally passionate about. Prompted by a non-discrimination ordinance in 2012, the YP network has become a resource to encourage

young professionals to engage in community dialogue.

In doing so, Omaha's YP group has seemingly maintained a delicate balance between encouraging YP's to have a positive impact in the community, while still recognizing the Chamber board as the policy-making body for the organization as a whole. Although hot button issues may not garner a formal Chamber position, the power of the YP grassroots effort has been significant.

"Our group may not have formally taken a stance, but was active," David Arnold, chairman of the YP Council said. Similar to The Network for Young Professionals in Springfield, Arnold's position as chairman of the YP Council earns him a seat on the Greater Omaha Chamber's Board of Directors.



FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP FROM THE TOP DOWN

Omaha has a rich tradition of growing its own entrepreneurs, and today, Omaha is committed to supporting the continued growth of entrepreneurs and leaders.

“In the early days of a startup, it doesn’t matter how good your idea is if you can’t get it done. We have to prepare students for an entrepreneurial world,” David Arnold, managing director of startup accelerator, Straight Shot said.

Support for entrepreneurship in Omaha comes from the region’s largest corporations. Through mentorships, corporate partnerships and even “good will sponsorships,” some of Omaha’s top companies are helping to ensure that entrepreneurship thrives in the region.

The Mastercraft development is an important element in the entrepreneurial support structure that exists in Omaha. Located in North Downtown Omaha, the former furniture

factory now offers a creative habitat for companies from a range of industries including design, architecture, information technology, photography and more.

“We are teaching these entrepreneurs and risk takers to fish. Our ultimate success is measured by their ability to leave here with a growing business that they can operate while making a living doing something they are passionate about,” Mastercraft owner and developer Robert Grinnell said.

The Mastercraft building itself is a structural work of art that inspires creative ingenuity and has been instrumental in the rebirth of this part of downtown Omaha. Standing three football fields long, the space is leased as fast as the owners are able to complete renovations. More importantly, tenants are able to share space, resources, and ideas to support each other.

PUTTING PEER PRESSURE TO GOOD USE



Big projects with big price tags mark this community. A \$291 million convention center, a \$130 million TD Ameritrade Center, \$82 million raised for the Jocelyn Art Museum, \$34.5 million raised for the Strategic Air and Space Museum, a \$10 million renovation of the Community's Orpheum Theatre, \$100 million for the Holland Performing Arts Center – and the list goes on.

A central player in all of these projects is Heritage Services. Since its inception 25 years ago, Heritage Services has raised nearly a half billion dollars in donations for public-use buildings that are transforming the city. President of Heritage Services, Sue Morris gave the delegation a flavor for the types of projects her organization has been involved in and the role they have played in bringing projects to

fruition. In her words, Heritage Services is a not-for-profit developer. They are a 501c3 that provides strategic direction and oversight to design, construction, finance, and accounting for these projects.

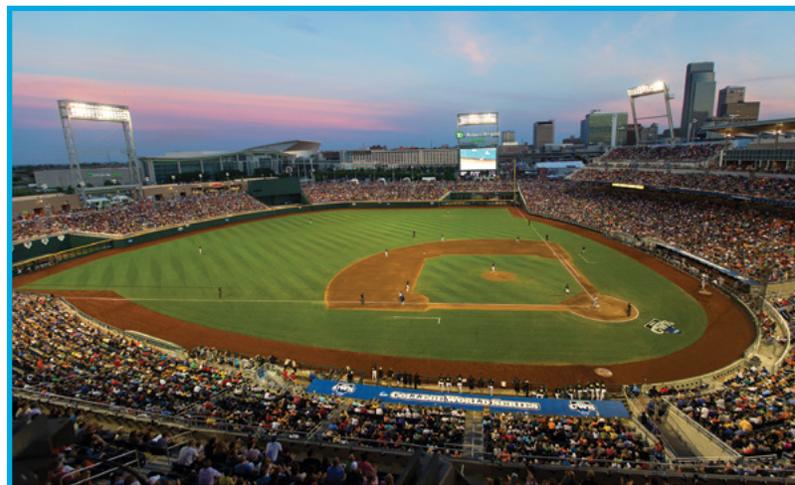
Heritage Services is changing the landscape of Omaha so much so, that the organization is seen as the “economic engine” for the region. Notably, the chairman of every Fortune 500 in Omaha sits on the Heritage Services board – and they pay to play. Each of the companies represented provide \$25,000 annually for their seat at the table, which goes toward funding the overhead of the organization.

Over its quarter of a century presence in Omaha, a great sense of trust has been built between the organization and the community. This has allowed the foundation to leverage tremendous dollar power to fund important projects through public-private partnerships. The convention center is a perfect example of the power of these relationships. To foot the \$291 million price tag, \$25 million came from the foundation, \$50 million was raised privately and the public then voted to pass a bond measure to cover the remaining costs.

To make all of this happen, Omaha has found a way to put some friendly “peer pressure” to good use as a means for engaging the leadership in the business community.

“There is an expectation that CEO’s here engage. There is a certain mentality of ‘yes we are giving because everyone else is doing it,’” Morris said.

Morris unapologetically shared the sentiment of the high expectations for philanthropic engagement among business leaders – and how this affluent community is responsible for grooming the next generation of philanthropists in order to keep the culture of giving alive.



“It is critical that you have a body of people that understand and nurtures philanthropy and nurtures non-philanthropists to come up through the ranks,” Morris said.

This sentiment among the business community has resulted in a robust Heritage Services that has created landmark opportunities and community staples while leveraging dollars and political capital.

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME...



At first glance, Omaha appears to have focused resources on “feel good issues,” but in reality the region has delivered a return on investment by rallying behind key priorities identified by data-driven research. Their focus on giving has brought the big players to the table, allowing them to fund tremendous community projects. By prioritizing workforce development, they are successfully attracting and retaining the best and brightest talent, and by creating a community that supports entrepreneurs, they know that they are investing in the Fortune 500 Companies of tomorrow. Omaha recognizes that these are all community development *must-dos*, and their clear, focused approach helps the community achieve the desired goals.

The three days in Omaha generated real excitement and direction around areas that Springfield can strive to improve as a community, but it also served as a reminder that we are already on the right track in many areas.

Springfield has had our own exciting and innovative talent attraction initiative with the launch of the www.LiveInSpringfieldMO.com. We are successfully tackling the shortfall to

the Police/Fire pension fund that has literally devastated other communities – an issue that Omaha has not yet resolved. Our public schools continue to be strong and are an asset to the region, whereas Omaha leaders referred to the school system as the “Achilles heel” they urgently need to address. In Springfield, opportunities for entrepreneurs continue to expand as the Kauffman Foundation’s “1 Million Cups” program flourishes and programs continue to develop at the eFactory at Missouri State University. With a record 400 plus YPs in The Network for Springfield’s Young Professionals, our young professionals have never been more engaged in the community.

Not unlike Omaha, Springfield leaders will continue to build on these and other strengths while simultaneously facing challenges with a spirit of collaboration and innovation.

As with any comparison, in Omaha we saw areas where we have room to grow. The trip generated excitement around identifying who we are as a community - who do we want to be? And most importantly, how do we want to get there? It is certain that Omaha does not coast – and neither does Springfield.

"I was extremely impressed with the depth of engagement of the very largest of Omaha's businesses. This engagement of their CEO's in helping to guide Omaha's direction, through both their time and corporate dollars, was evident through the many transformational civic, charitable and community developments that make it the progressive city that it is today. Very impressive!"

John Wanamaker
Managing Partner, BKD, LLP

"My big take away was related to the power of aligning the community behind a common empowering theme, in Omaha's case, "We don't coast." This seemed to spur and align so many activities related to economic development including education, job creation, business incubation, tourism, improving schools and philanthropy."

Steve Edwards
President and CEO, CoxHealth

"Omaha has a lot of great things going on, especially geared towards young professionals, but it also made me realize, so do we! One key takeaway I had for myself as well as other young professionals, is to be bold and vocal when it comes to advocacy efforts, especially when it comes to attracting and retaining young professionals. We need to realize that we have a voice and it will make a difference for the future of our community."

Teresa Coyan
Legislative and Public Affairs Manager
CoxHealth

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