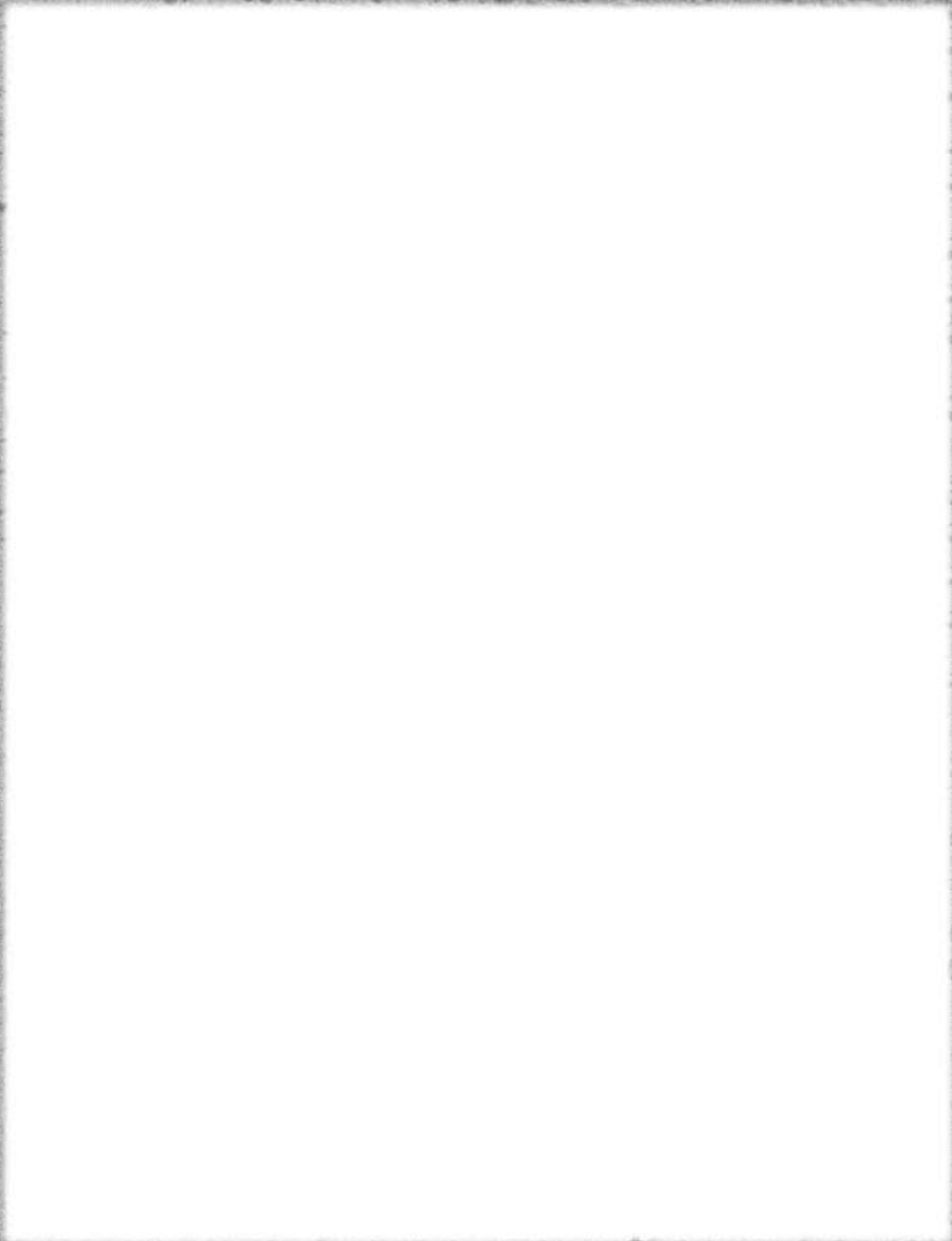


Nebraska Department of Economic Development

# Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2000-2001



# *A Message from the Director*

Dear Governor Johanns,  
Speaker Kristensen, Members of the Legislature,  
and Citizens of Nebraska:

On behalf of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED), I present our fiscal year 2000-2001 Annual Report. In many respects, this was a significant year for economic development in Nebraska.

In June 2000, DED and a number of partner organizations, commissioned a new Target Industry Study that, I believe, will become the state's defining economic development cornerstone for this decade. During FY00-01 alone, this document rallied support from local, state, public and private entities alike. Together, we are addressing the development of the industries targeted, using a balanced approach, with equal emphases on community development to support growth; the attraction of new businesses to the state; providing assistance in retaining and expanding existing Nebraska businesses; and fostering new business development through entrepreneurship.



Integral to this endeavor have been:

- Continuation of the successful Nebraska Business Visitation Program, launched in 1999. DED Regional Team members, along with local leaders and volunteers, and officials from area development districts and utility corporations visited more than 350 businesses in 10 counties. The information provided state and local leaders with valuable data on business climate, workforce, expansion and investment plans, helping them target where they may need assistance. For example, the teams learned that more than 204 of 350 surveyed businesses have expansion plans, and 197 of these planned to invest \$73.5 million through capital expenditures.

Equally important to the work of this department is the passage and appropriations for the following new and existing legislation.

- LB 225, The Venture Capital Forum Act, that establishes a statewide program to facilitate private venture capital investments in Nebraska businesses.
- LB 243, which allows public power utilities to negotiate power rates for commercial and industrial customers who have entered into an agreement with state or local government to provide economic development projects consistent with relevant state and local legal requirements.
- LB 433, which provides child care tax credits for three years to business employers that offer child care services to employees.
- LB 516, which eliminates the sunset date for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund.
- LB 536, which provides 18 cents per gallon production credit for eight years for ethanol that is produced at new plants in Nebraska.
- LB 620, The Invest Nebraska Act, that reenacts and changes the old Quality Jobs Act and adds a rural development component. This piece of legislation is sure to become one of the most useful economic tools authorized by the Nebraska Legislature.

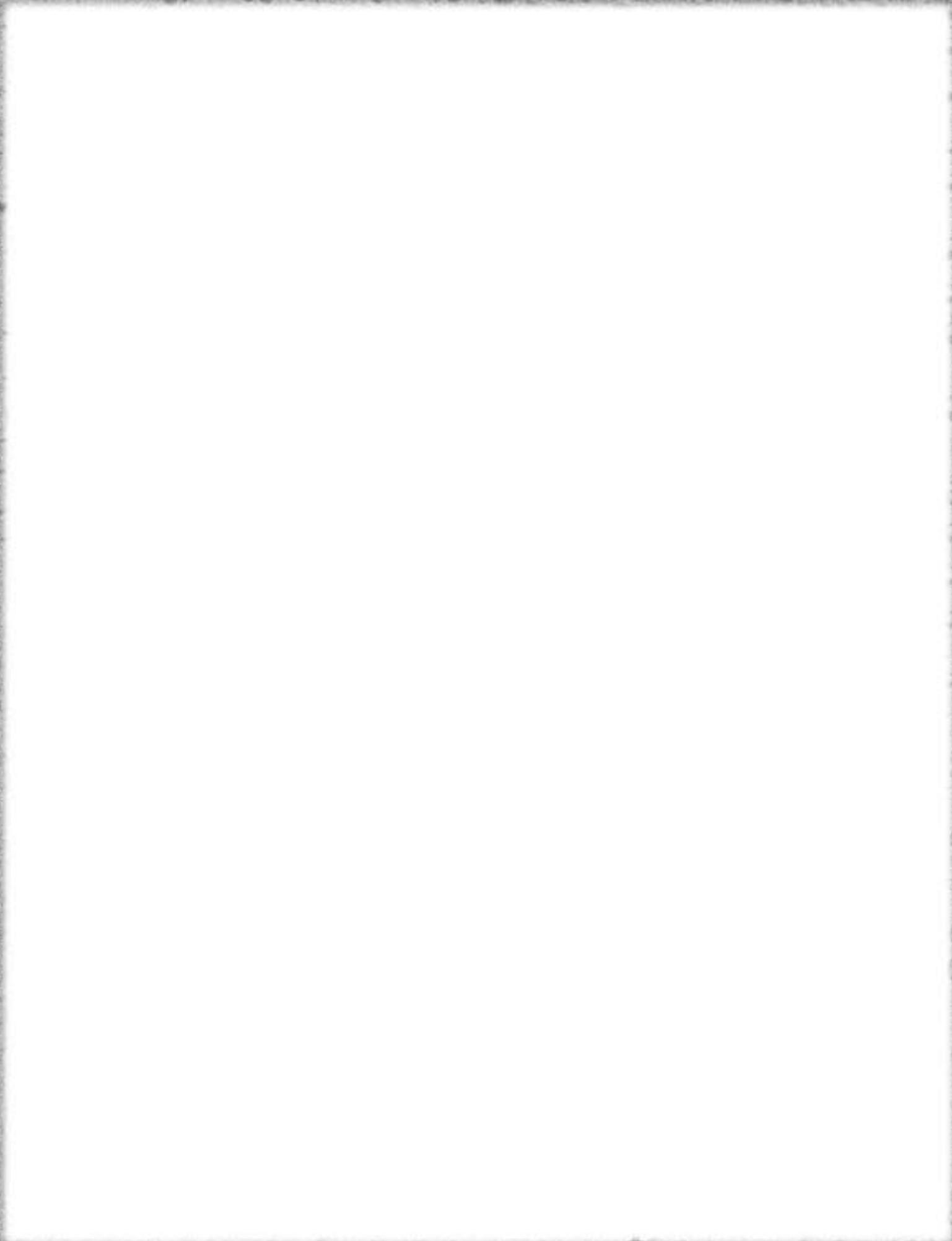
Last, but not least, additional funding for customized job training related to economic development projects. It is evident that Nebraska must continue to use these valuable economic development tools in order to improve and build upon our economy. And equally important to this equation are the issues of diversification of the business community, workforce development and labor availability and an adequate supply of quality, affordable housing.

DED proudly steps up to the challenge of further growing and strengthening Nebraska's economy in the years to come. The department continues on a course of providing quality programs and services to help meet the needs of all Nebraskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Al Wenstrand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Al Wenstrand



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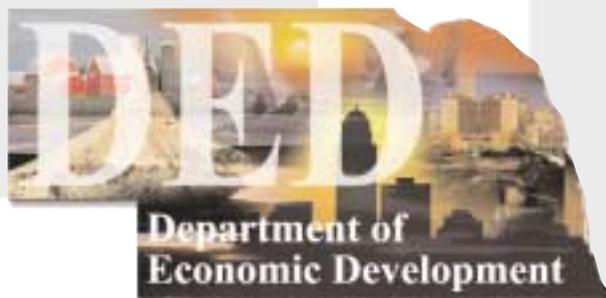
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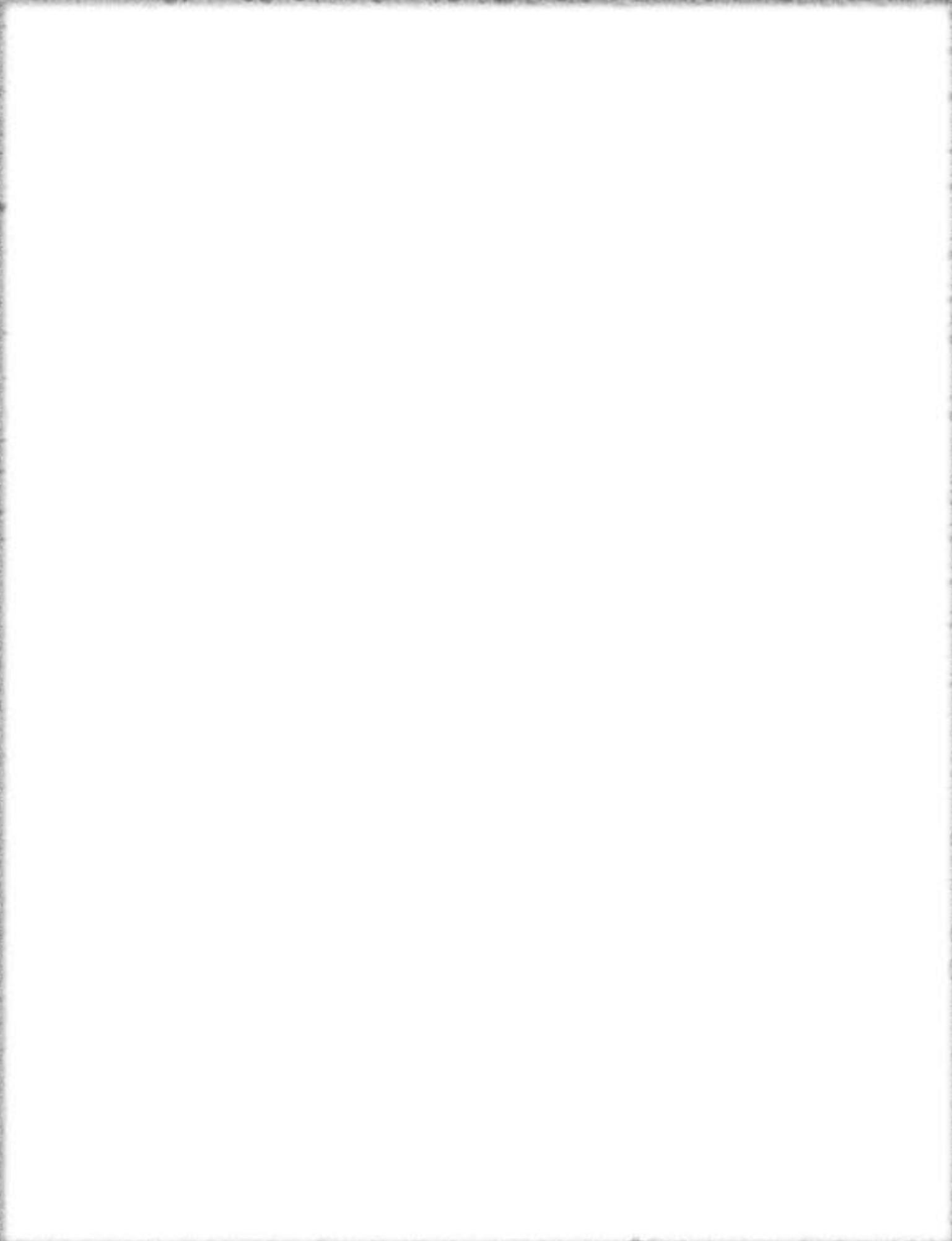
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# **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

***The mission of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) is to develop economic opportunities by keeping Nebraska businesses, communities and people competitive. The department also is committed to providing customers with services that meet or exceed their needs and to continually improve the quality of these services.***

DED's approach to accomplishing its mission is to encourage (1) proper preparation for development; (2) support for the start up of new businesses; (3) retention and expansion of existing businesses; and (4) recruitment of business operations and spending from outside the state.

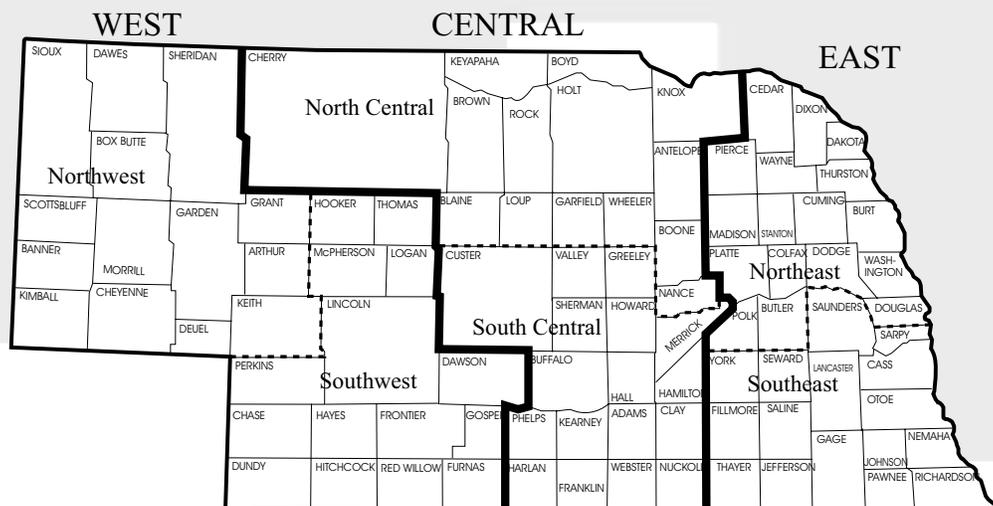
Accomplishing this mission is impossible without the actions of communities, the Nebraska State Legislature, and other private and public organizations that provide development programs and services, as well as numerous Nebraskans who give their time and effort to this endeavor. These combined efforts draw continuing attention to the state and local business tax and incentive climate, to community and regional preparedness for development, and to the technical support needed for businesses statewide to profit and grow.

## **DED STAFFING AND ORGANIZATION**

As of Summer 2001, the department had 72 staff. The staff are advised by a nine-member Economic Development Commission with equal representation from each of the three congressional districts. Although the department is organized into divisions (see organizational chart) most program preparation and delivery occurs through interdivisional teams. Several are noted on the organization chart.

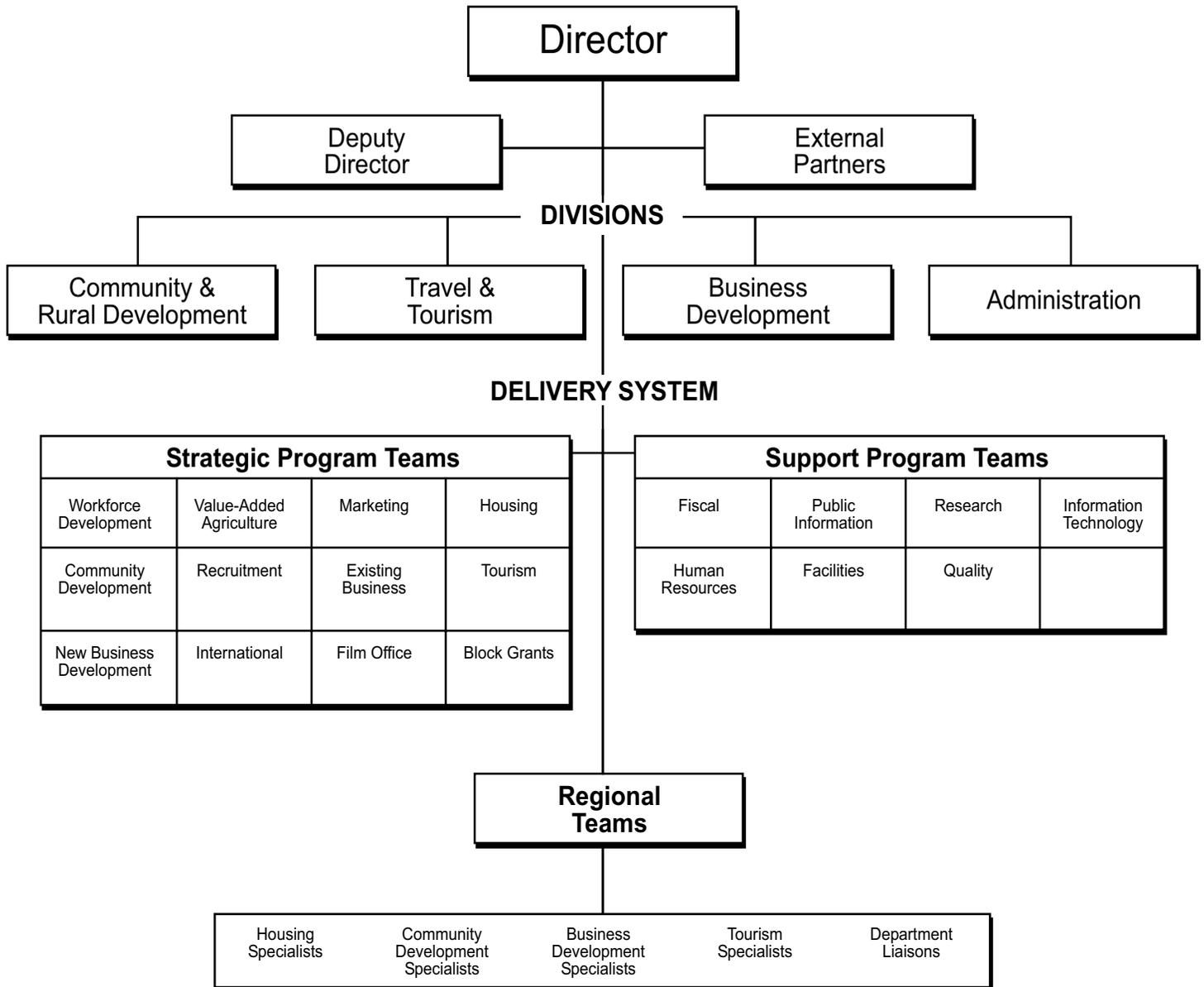
The primary attention in program delivery during the 2000-2001 fiscal year was to shift the base of operation for staff from Lincoln to locations across the state. At the end of the year, 18 DED staff were assigned to three regional teams — Western, Central and Eastern Nebraska. Each team features two development generalists and specialists in each of the areas of tourism, business development and housing. Each regional team develops its own work plan based on department priorities and development needs and priorities for that region.

## **DED Service Regions**



# **ORGANIZATION CHART**

## Nebraska Department of Economic Development



# **FY 2000-2001 BUDGET**

The 2000-2001 budget for the department was \$39.5 million. The major source of funding was federal funds, totaling nearly \$20.1 million. The principal source for federal funds was the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Grant programs, which totaled over \$16 million.

Of the \$12.9 million received from State Cash Funds, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Grant and Homeless Shelter Assistance Grant programs totaled \$8.3 million. Other Major Aid programs are shown in the budget summary.

## **ISO 9000:2000 Certification**

During the fiscal year, a major priority was to achieve certification under the ISO 9000:2000 program. This program has established quality management and operations standards accepted by more than 70 countries. The process leading to ISO certification included preparation of a quality manual, establishing procedures for the department's operations and incorporating computer software to ensure documentation for improvement. DED identified the following quality system policy:

***“The Nebraska Department of Economic Development is committed to providing customers with services that meet or exceed their needs and to continually improve the quality of their services.”***

The process for implementing the ISO quality development system was well underway at the end of the fiscal year with certification expected early in the 2002 calendar year. After certification, DED will be the first economic development state agency in the nation to be certified to the 9001:2000 standard.

## **FY 00-01 BUDGET SUMMARY NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Sources of Funds**

General Funds	\$ 6.5 million
Cash Funds	\$ 12.9 million
<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>\$ 20.1 million</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$39.5 million</b>

### **Uses of Funds**

Staff	\$ 3.6 million
Operations	\$ 6.5 million
<u>Total Aid</u>	<u>\$ 29.4 million</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$39.5 million</b>

### **Major Aid Programs**

CDBG/HOME	\$ 16,256,900
Microenterprise Program	\$ 422,700
Customized Job Training	\$ 1,572,200
Homeless Shelter Assistance	\$ 1,288,100
Affordable Housing Trust Fund	\$ 7,013,000
Travel/Tourism Grants	\$ 68,500

# **ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Given that DED actions are intended to positively impact Nebraska's economy, it is appropriate to review the economy's recent performance. During FY 2000-2001, growth in Nebraska's economy slowed, as did the national economy. But it did not slow as much as growth in the overall U.S. economy, according to data reported by the Nebraska Department of Labor.

The state's unemployment rate decreased from 3.1 percent in June 2000 to 2.9 percent in June 2001. During the same period, the U.S. unemployment rate rose from 4.0 percent to 4.5 percent. The number of employed persons living in Nebraska increased by 3.2 percent, while the corresponding national gain was just 0.2 percent.

## **INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT**

Despite the growth in the number employed in Nebraska, there was a slight decrease in employment by place of work, or count of payroll jobs. As shown in Table 1, total nonfarm payroll employment in Nebraska fell from 924,093 in June 2000 to 920,432 in June 2001.

Employment in mining, services, and government increased. But it decreased in construction; transportation and public utilities; wholesale trade; retail trade; and finance, insurance, and real estate. Total manufacturing employment also declined: the number of jobs in food processing and other nondurable goods production increased, while they fell in durable goods manufacturing.

**TABLE 1**  
**Non-Farm Payroll Employment in Nebraska**  
**Industry Breakdown, June 2000-June 2001**

<b><u>Sector</u></b>	<b><u>June 2000</u></b>	<b><u>June 2001</u></b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
Mining	1,306	1,340	34	2.6%
Construction	47,320	46,344	-976	-2.1%
Manufacturing	121,571	118,835	-2,736	-2.3%
Transportation and Public Utilities	58,394	57,196	-1,198	-2.1%
Wholesale Trade	54,959	54,103	-856	-1.6%
Retail Trade	164,982	162,295	-2,687	-1.6%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	61,865	61,538	-327	-0.5%
Services	256,047	259,375	3,328	1.3%
Government	<u>157,649</u>	<u>159,406</u>	<u>1,757</u>	<u>1.1%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>924,093</b>	<b>920,432</b>	<b>-3,661</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The majority of Nebraska's population and employment is now in the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas. Of a total state population of 1,711,263 counted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 2000, 879,585, or 51.4 percent, resided in metropolitan Omaha and Lincoln. In June 2001, the two metropolitan areas together had 59.2 percent of the state's nonfarm jobs. But this was a decline from 59.6 percent a year earlier. As shown in Table 2, Nebraska's portion of the Omaha metropolitan area (Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties), total nonfarm employment decreased by 5,942 from June 2000 to June 2001 (see Table 2). It grew by 49 jobs in metropolitan Lincoln (Lancaster County), and by 2,232 jobs in nonmetropolitan Nebraska.

## WAGES AND INCOME

Strong demand for workers in many industries helped boost wages in Nebraska in FY 2000-2001. The average hourly earnings of manufacturing production workers reported by the Nebraska Department of Labor rose from \$12.83 in June 2000 to \$13.38 in June 2001. In the services sector, there was an increase from \$12.33 to \$13.50 per hour. Wage increases were especially large in business services, where the average hourly earnings went from \$12.73 to \$15.22 – a jump of almost 20 percent.

In agriculture—Nebraska's largest sector for both self-employment and home-based business—continued low commodity prices hurt incomes. The average prices received by farmers for corn, soybeans, and grain sorghum fell from June 2000 to June 2001, but increased for wheat. There were small increases in beef cattle and hog prices.

The average income of Nebraskans (including wages, interest, dividends, transfer payments, etc.) has historically been below the national average. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that per capita personal income in Nebraska in 2000 was \$27,829, or 93.8 percent, of the U.S. average of \$29,676. Some of this difference is offset by a cost of living that also is below the national average. The first quarter 2001 cost of living survey by the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association found that the average general living costs in Nebraska communities surveyed was 2 percent below the national average.

## NEBRASKA DATABOOK

Much of the above information and other data on Nebraska can be seen in the *Nebraska Databook*, accessible via DED's home page at: <http://www.neded.org>

**TABLE 2**  
**Non-Farm Employment by Place of Work in Nebraska**  
**Regional Breakdown, June 2000-June 2001**

<u>Region</u>	<u>June 2000</u>	<u>June 2001</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Metropolitan Omaha	394,726	388,784	-5,942	-1.5%
Metropolitan Lincoln	156,495	156,544	49	0.0%
Rest of State	<u>372,872</u>	<u>375,104</u>	<u>2,232</u>	<u>0.6%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>924,093</b>	<b>920,432</b>	<b>-3,661</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor

# **COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Programs to support community and rural development help Nebraskans build development capacity, as well as improve leadership and decision-making skills at the local level. These include the state's Community Development Block Grant program, a federal resource to fund housing and infrastructure projects, stimulate revitalization, and expand and help shape business and economic development efforts.*

## **FY00-01 HIGHLIGHTS**

- 15 businesses and nonprofit organizations received a total of \$2,985,000 in economic development grants, leveraging an additional \$81,440,000 and creating 386 jobs.
- \$542,945 of CDBG funds went to 31 local governments for implementing plans that are intended to lead to further growth and development.
- 17 community betterment organizations received \$124,000 in state tax credits to assist with development of more than \$4 million worth of projects, including libraries, museums, youth programs, homeless programs, housing projects and recreational activities.
- 70 communities were assisted through the Nebraska Community Improvement Program.
- 12 public works projects were funded with \$2,465,000 CDBG funds.

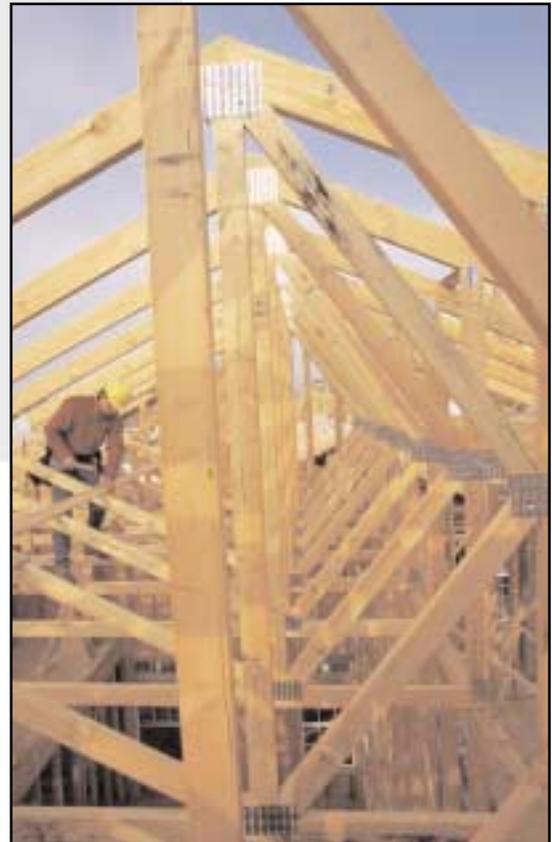
Following are program summaries in the area of Community and Rural Development.

## **NEBRASKA COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (NCIP)**

NCIP provides statewide recognition for outstanding community and economic development efforts, and assisted 70 communities with planning and implementing projects during FY 2000-2001. Another 35 communities and nonprofit organizations received staff assistance with strategic planning.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACT (CDAA)**

CDAA provides tax credits to local governments and nonprofit organizations, which use the credits as incentives for businesses to donate funds to their organization for specific development projects. In FY00-01, 17 community betterment organizations received \$124,000 in state tax credits to assist with development of more than \$4 million worth of projects.



## **WATER/WASTEWATER AND PUBLIC WORKS GRANTS**

A multi-agency joint review and funding process for water/wastewater projects handled 11 projects, funded with \$2,645,600 CDBG funds in FY00-01. Twelve public works projects also received \$2,465,000 CDBG funds.

## **PLANNING GRANTS**

During FY00-01, the state awarded \$542,945 CDBG funds to 31 local governments for implementing strategic plans that lead to further growth and development. Projects included redevelopment plans, water and sewer studies, comprehensive plans and zoning, and housing studies among other things.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

Creating quality jobs, retaining existing businesses and providing assistance to attract new businesses remains a priority for DED. During 00-01, \$2.985 million was granted to local governments that resulted in loans to businesses and nonprofit corporations. These loans leveraged an additional \$81.4 million invested in new business facilities, equipment and infrastructure resulting in the creation of 386 jobs. A Speculative Building loan program also was launched.

## **HOUSING GRANTS**

During 00-01, the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) awarded \$8.8 million to 59 organizations. From Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2000, various entities requested approximately \$13.7 million for housing activities from the Nebraska Affordable Housing Program funds, which is funded by NAHTF, as well as the federal CDBG Program and HOME Investment Partnership.

## **NEBRASKA MICROENTERPRISE FUND**

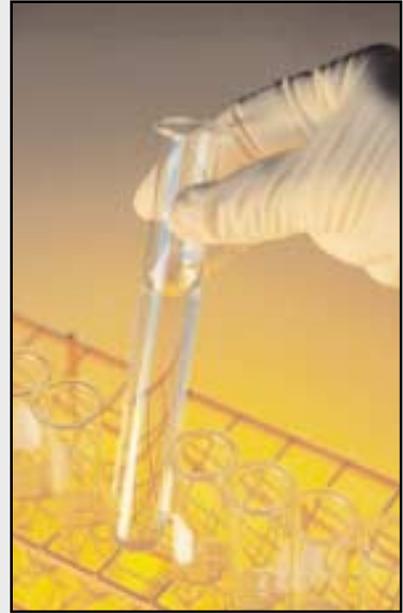
The Nebraska Microenterprise Fund serves businesses with five or fewer employees. From 1997-1999, the fund made 211 loans totaling \$1,040,328. During the same period, more than 2,200 clients received business training. As a result, 889 jobs were created or retained. Of the clients served, 49 percent lived in distressed counties, 45 percent were low-to-moderate income earners, and 22 percent were on public assistance.

# **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

*Staff support business development by working with communities and other development organizations to recruit new businesses, expand existing businesses, and support the start-up of new businesses.*

## **FY00-01 HIGHLIGHTS**

- Recruitment staff helped locate 31 new industries, expand 41 industries, and relocate four industries for an investment of \$602,975,000 and 3,419 new jobs.
- The One-Stop office responded to 2,800 phone requests; had 92,013 visitors to the Business Assistance Toolkit on the department's website; 377 subscribers to the economic development listserv; and 250 subscribers to the Nebraska Manufacturers listserv.
- DED staff, local leaders and volunteers, and officials from area development districts and utility corporations visited more than 350 businesses in 10 counties.
- 804 employees were trained or retrained using customized training funds.
- The Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) conducted 48 events/workshops attended by 1,220 employees from 138 companies.



Following are program summaries in the area of business development.

## **ONE-STOP BUSINESS ASSISTANCE**

The One-Stop Business Assistance office responds to a wide variety of questions from people starting or operating businesses, helps get answers to questions, and locates other resources when appropriate. In FY00-01, the office responded to 2,800 phone requests, 92,013 visitors to the Business Assistance Toolkit on the department's website, 377 subscribers to the economic development listserv, and 250 subscribers to the Nebraska Manufacturers listserv.

## **NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM**

DED staff, local leaders and volunteers, and officials from area development districts and utility corporations visited more than 350 businesses in 10 counties. At Governor Johanns' invitation, businesses participated in survey interviews. The information provided general business information, data on business climate, workforce, expansion and investment plans, and business assistance needs. Of the 350 surveyed businesses, 204 indicated they have expansion plans. Of these, 197 plan to invest in capital purchases.

## **NEBRASKA WORKS**

The Nebraska Works program assists businesses and communities with developing workforce development plans to address issues related to recruiting and retaining employees, and developing communities as "communities of choice" for business and industries and workers. During FY00-01, West Point Trade Center, Sidney/Cheyenne County and Kearney piloted the "Building the Foundations of Workforce Development" process.

## **SURETY BOND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Surety Bond Assistance Program provides technical, financial and managerial assistance to small contractors, architects and engineers to obtain bid and performance bonding. During the past five years, the program has produced more than 390 program bond placements and provided small business concerns access to more than \$1 billion in contractible opportunities.



## **CUSTOMIZED JOB TRAINING**

DED's job training funds provide pre-employment training delivered through community colleges or other vendors. In addition, funds help offset costs associated with on-the-job training for new hires and retraining on new processes and equipment for existing workers. In FY00-01, 804 employees were trained or retrained using customized training funds. The starting wage of workers hired and trained for new jobs was \$11.87.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE & INVESTMENT**

During FY00-01, DED's Office of International Trade & Investment cosponsored one international trade and investment mission to Taiwan, Singapore and Korea led by Governor Mike Johanns; three trade shows in Mexico and Korea; and a trade and reverse investment mission to Europe. DED's International Trade & Investment Office, with various partners, organized 12 training events for export businesses, and made seven presentations to educational institutions in Nebraska regarding international workforce development. Nebraska's origin of movement exports totaled more than \$2.5 billion in 2000, or 9.8 percent more than in 1999.

## **BUSINESS RECRUITMENT**

The business recruitment program works with communities to attract new businesses and industries through national and international advertising, direct mail campaigns, phone interviews with potential clients, and participation in special events and trade shows targeting specific industries. DED partnered with state utility districts, and organizations, such as the Nebraska Diplomats and Nebraska Economic Developers Association to call on 137 businesses in FY00-01. Recruitment staff helped locate 31 new industries, expand 41 industries, and relocate four industries for a total investment of \$602,975,000 and creation of 3,419 jobs. Delegation trips to Europe, the Pacific Rim, East and West Coasts, Texas, Minnesota, Colorado, and the Midwest resulted in more than 30 leads and several companies locating in Nebraska.

## **FILM OFFICE**

FY00-01 filmmaking projects resulted in \$10.5 million spent in the state by three major feature films and numerous independent film and commercial projects. The Film Office conducted a direct mail campaign to more than 4,500 professional contacts. An updated Film Production Guide was prepared. Working with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Ross Film Theater, DED's Film Office co-hosted the biannual Great Plains Film Festival. The Film Office is coordinating a Film Industry Development Study to determine capabilities for attracting more productions, and to identify future opportunities for expanding and building on the industry.

## **VALUE-ADDED ALLIANCE**

The Value-Added (VA) Alliance Initiative assists Nebraska food industry companies by introducing new technologies, assisting with international business relationships and businesses alliance formations, and developing strategic plans.

The VA Alliance Initiative has been introduced to more than 70 Nebraska-related companies and is currently addressing project potentials with 25. A value-added industry leadership forum was conducted in June 2001 in Lincoln.

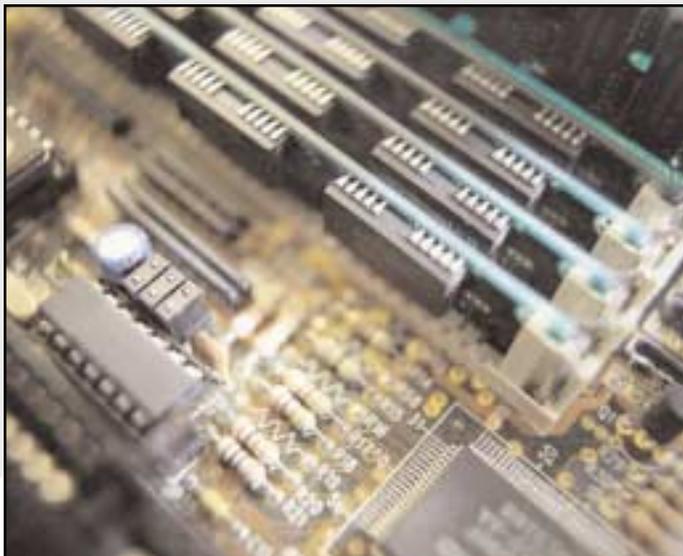
## **ENTERPRISE ZONES**

The Enterprise Zone Act broadens and stabilizes the state's economic base by stimulating job creation and investments in distressed areas. In FY00-01, there was more than \$5 million of new business investment in Enterprise Zones, creating 91 jobs paying average hourly wages of \$8.42.

## **NEBRASKA INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS ALLIANCE**

To assure that businesses remain competitive in Nebraska, the core strategic planning and governance of several major initiatives are located with the Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance (NICA) with administrative support from DED. NICA has standing committees for the Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership and Nebraska Target

Industry Implementation. The NICA initiatives are among the nation's most unique in that they are led by a public/private partnership.



## **NEBRASKA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (MEP)**

The Nebraska MEP is a cooperative effort involving state government and education-based service organizations that provide business and technical services to manufacturers throughout the state. A network of six customer agents and eight industry specialists located across Nebraska provide “solutions for manufacturers” to help keep them competitive. MEP conducted 48 events/workshops attended by 1,220 employees from 138 companies. An independent survey of Nebraska MEP clients for satisfaction, job and economic impacts resulting from completed projects reported an average satisfaction rating of 4.1 (on a scale of 0-5), total job impact (retained and created) of 878 jobs, and economic impact totaling more than \$41 million. Nebraska MEP also conducted projects for 473 firms of targeted industries in Nebraska.

## **TARGET INDUSTRY IMPLEMENTATION**

A partnership among Fannie Mae, the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry, DED, the Nebraska Development Network, Nebraska Diplomats, Nebraska Economic Developers Association, Nebraska Municipal Power Pool, Nebraska Public Power District, and Omaha Public Power District commissioned Deloitte & Touche Fantus to conduct a targeted industry study for Nebraska. The firm identified business clusters that

- Have greater than average capital investments.
- Are growth industries.
- Have greater than average payrolls and benefits.
- Produce high value-added products or services.

Six business clusters were identified: agribusiness, metal products manufacturing, and financial services, biotechnology, electronics manufacturing, and information technology/software development.

# **TRAVEL AND TOURISM**

*DED's travel and tourism program offers services to help communities and regions develop tourism potential, thereby strengthening and building on Nebraska's third-largest industry.*

## **FY00-01 HIGHLIGHTS**

- Responded to 139,849 requests for travel information
- 19,521 e-mail responses
- 543,288 website user sessions
- Media campaign reached 240 million households worldwide
- Computer stations and video monitors located at I-80 rest areas and attractions
- More than 300,000 travelers assisted at I-80 rest areas and two other sites
- Information provided to more than 400 tour operator and travel agencies
- Provided 41 local/regional tourism marketing grants
- \$1,118,400 in grants for 12 tourism development projects across Nebraska

Tourism is Nebraska's third-largest earner of revenue from outside the state after agriculture and manufacturing. Tourists spent nearly \$2.8 billion in Nebraska during 2000 on trips away from home with overnight stays in paid accommodations and on day trips to places 100 miles or more away. The industry employs more than 43,000 Nebraskans. Visitors to Nebraska and Nebraskans together made 19.3 million trips in the state in 2000 to destinations 100 miles or more away from home. The average stay of nonresidents in the state was 2.2 nights. Kansas, Iowa, Colorado, Missouri, South Dakota, Illinois, and Minnesota were the leading states of origin for Nebraska.



Following are program summaries in the area of travel and tourism.

## **TOURISM INFORMATION**

In FY00-01, Travel and Tourism received and filled 109,422 requests for travel information. A total of 14,840 e-mail requests were received and answered. Staff also distributed 300,000 copies of the 2001 *Nebraska Traveler* magazine, and 175,000 copies of the 2001 *Nebraska Events* catalogs to travelers.

## **INDUSTRY MARKETING PLAN**

An annual industry marketing and partnership plan promotes Nebraska as a travel destination for domestic and international travelers. The plan combines use of radio, TV, print and the Internet to reach approximately 240 million households, and offers advertising/marketing opportunities for Nebraska communities and businesses.

## **ELECTRONIC TOURISM INFORMATION SYSTEM (ETIS)**

The ETIS employs computer and video technology in selected rest areas and tourism attractions to encourage travelers along I-80 to explore greater Nebraska. Twelve computer stations allow vacation guides to retrieve and distribute information while video monitors let travelers independently learn about upcoming attractions and facilities. Six touch screen kiosks also are located at private attractions and industry locations throughout the state.

## **VACATION GUIDE PROGRAM**

In FY00-01, more than 40 vacation guides staffed selected I-80 rest areas, and visitor centers in Sioux City, Iowa, and the Wildcat Hills between Kimball and Scottsbluff, assisting more than 200,000 resident and nonresident travelers during the "peak" and "shoulder" travel months.

## **GROUP TOUR MARKETING**

In FY00-01, staff attended five group travel/tour operator shows, hosted one tour operator familiarization tour, and provided information to more than 750 tour operators and travel agencies.

## **TRAVEL WRITER'S ASSISTANCE**

Staff work with freelance travel writers and local, domestic and international media to provide information for stories or places to write about, and to host them on press tours around the state. Travel and Tourism also arranges visits for individual writers who are producing special features about the state. In FY00-01, print and electronic stories about Nebraska had an annual average publicity value exceeding \$750,000.

## **TOURISM MARKETING GRANT PROGRAM**

Travel and Tourism earmarks \$75,000 of its operating budget for innovative marketing efforts aimed at increasing tourism revenues in Nebraska. In FY00-01, 41 grants of \$5,000 or less were awarded for regional promotion, attendance to sports and trade shows, and the promotion of new or expanded events.

## **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

The Tourism Assessment Resource Growth Evaluation Team (TARGET) program gives communities the opportunity to evaluate their tourism potential. Six new TARGET programs were conducted in FY00-01. DED also awarded more than \$1,118,400 in CDBG tourism development grants in FY00-01 through the Tourism Development Initiative.

## **NEBRASKA TRAVEL CONFERENCE**

The Nebraska Travel Conference annually attracts professionals from all areas of tourism, including Convention and Visitors' Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, hotels and attractions and events planners. Attendance has swelled to nearly 300. During the past five years, sponsors' contributions have increased from \$2,000 to nearly \$30,000.

# **Economic Development Commission**

A.F. "Tony" Raimondo, Chairman  
Columbus, NE

David Simmons  
Fremont, NE

Bill Harris  
Lincoln, NE

Janet A. Palmtag  
Nebraska City, NE

Ruth Chermok  
Omaha, NE

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Terry L. Moore  
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