

ANNUAL REPORT: FISCAL YEAR 2001-2002

Nebraska[®]



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

❖ A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR ❖

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

On behalf of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED), I present our Fiscal Year 2001-2002 Annual Report. This past year has presented economic challenges that have been addressed as one would expect here in the Midwest: with careful thought, deliberation and determination to do what is right for our people, communities, and ultimately, for Nebraska.



I have always believed that a healthy economic development program is balanced among four criteria: product development, retention and expansion of existing business, attraction, and new business development. Ideally, each component would receive approximately equal emphasis and resource allocation.

In 2001-2002, retention of existing businesses and jobs became a necessary focus, particularly in light of the slowing economy and resulting business consolidations, mergers and acquisitions. Recent good news, however, indicates that business development activity is slowly picking up the pace. Department programs, such as Job Training and the Community Development Assistance Act are in the position to provide communities with much needed opportunities to enhance economic development and infrastructure development.

During the next several years, our department's goal will be to retain those improvements and programs associated with product development and retention and expansion activities, while bringing new business development and attraction activities back into balance. We also look forward to bolstering the state's marketing, recruiting and entrepreneurship activities, serving to boost and build on our state's economic recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Al Wenstrand". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Al Wenstrand

***Information about the programs featured in this report may be accessed online at: www.neded.org
or by calling (800) 426-6505 or (402) 471-3111.***



❖ 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.

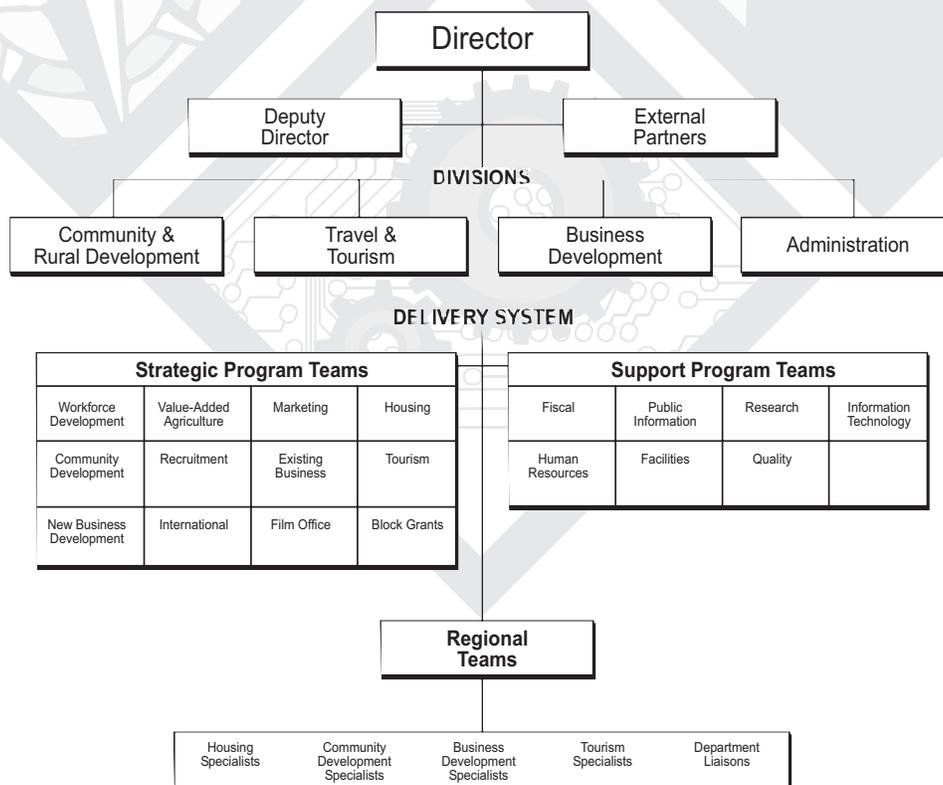
Accomplishing this mission is impossible without the state's many communities, the Nebraska State Legislature, and other private and public organizations that provide development programs and services, as well as many Nebraskans who give their time and effort to this endeavor. These combined efforts 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 2002, the department had 65 staff. The department is organized in divisions, but most program and service delivery occurs through interdivisional teams (see Organizational Chart).

Regional Teams, representing western, central and eastern Nebraska, offer experience and expertise to communities and businesses in the areas of community development, business development, business retention and expansion, affordable housing and tourism development. Much of the local assistance from programs reviewed in this report is a result of Regional Team actions.

❖ DED ORGANIZATION CHART ❖



DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW (CONT.)

“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.”

ISO 9003 CERTIFICATION

In November 2001, the department became the first state economic development agency in the nation registered under the ISO 9001-2000 Quality Standard. This registration represents compliance with quality standards that are recognized universally by companies throughout the world. The International Organization for Standards promotes the development of standardization and related activities worldwide with the objective of exchanging high quality goods and services, as well as developing cooperation in the intellectual, scientific, technological and economic arenas. The department joins more than 125 Nebraska businesses that are ISO registered. Internationally, there are more than 500,000 ISO registered companies with 37,000 located in the U.S.

FY 2001-2002 BUDGET SUMMARY

FY 2001-2002 BUDGET SUMMARY

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SOURCES OF FUNDS

General Funds	\$ 5,129,035
Cash Funds	11,778,296
<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>24,951,258</u>
TOTAL	\$41,858,589

USES OF FUNDS

Staff	\$ 3,911,042
Operations	4,631,228
<u>Aid</u>	<u>33,316,320</u>
TOTAL	\$ 41,858,589

MAJOR AID PROGRAMS

CDBG/HOME	\$ 18,545,485
Affordable Housing Trust Fund	7,400,000
Customized Job Training	2,708,250
Microenterprise Assistance	480,000
Nebraska Lied Main Street	120,000
Travel and Tourism Grants	97,000

❖ 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 2001-2002, growth in Nebraska's economy slowed. 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 increased from 3.5 percent in June 2001 to 3.9 percent in June 2002. During the same period, the U.S. unemployment rate rose from 4.5 to 5.9 percent. The number of employed persons living in Nebraska increased by 2.2 percent, while total U.S. employment declined by 0.6 percent.

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Despite growth in the number of employed persons in Nebraska, there was a slight decrease in employment by place of work, or count of jobs. As shown in Table 1, total nonfarm employment in Nebraska fell by 0.2 percent from 919,775 in June 2001 to 917,704 in June 2002. Employment in mining; wholesale trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; services; and government increased. It decreased in construction; manufacturing; transportation, communications, and utilities; and retail trade.

❖ **TABLE 1** ❖
NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT BY PLACE OF WORK IN NEBRASKA
INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN, JUNE 2001 AND JUNE 2002

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	<u>JUNE 2001</u>	<u>JUNE 2002</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Mining	1,264	1,338	74	5.6%
Construction	46,108	45,313	-795	-1.7%
Manufacturing	118,006	113,331	-4,675	-4.0%
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	62,780	63,544	764	1.2%
Wholesale Trade	53,017	54,869	1,852	3.5%
Retail Trade	161,445	160,029	-1,416	-0.9%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	62,780	63,544	764	1.2%
Services	260,128	261,693	1,565	0.6%
<u>Government</u>	<u>159,148</u>	<u>160,268</u>	<u>1,120</u>	<u>0.7%</u>
TOTAL	919,775	917,704	-2,071	-0.2%

SOURCE: NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

In agriculture—Nebraska's largest sector for both self-employment and home-based business—drought in many parts of the state harmed production. The average prices received by farmers for corn, soybeans, and grain sorghum rose from June 2001 to June 2002, but fell for wheat, and there were significant declines in beef cattle and hog prices.

❖ ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (CONT.) ❖

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 1,713,235 estimated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for 2001, 887,446, or 51.8 percent, resided in metropolitan Omaha and Lincoln. In June 2002, the two metropolitan areas together had 59.4 percent of the state's nonfarm jobs. But this was a decrease from 59.7 percent a year earlier. As shown in Table 2, in both metropolitan Lincoln (Lancaster County) and Nebraska's portion of the Omaha metropolitan area (Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties), total nonfarm employment decreased by 0.7 percent from June 2001 to June 2002. It grew by 0.5 percent in nonmetropolitan Nebraska.

❖ **TABLE 2** ❖
NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT BY PLACE OF WORK IN NEBRASKA
REGIONAL BREAKDOWN, JUNE 2001 AND JUNE 2002

<u>REGION</u>	<u>JUNE 2001</u>	<u>JUNE 2002</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Metropolitan Omaha	390,878	387,993	-2,885	-0.7%
Metropolitan Lincoln	157,972	156,918	-1,054	-0.7%
<u>Rest of State</u>	<u>370,925</u>	<u>372,793</u>	<u>1,868</u>	<u>0.5%</u>
TOTAL	919,775	917,704	-2,071	-0.2%

SOURCE: NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

WAGES AND INCOME

Rising worker productivity in many industries helped boost wages in Nebraska in FY 2001-2002. The average hourly earnings of manufacturing production workers reported by the Nebraska Department of Labor rose from \$13.31 in June 2001 to \$13.67 in June 2002. In the services sector, there was an increase from \$13.52 to \$14.49 per hour.

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 2001 was \$28,886, or 94.8 percent, of the U.S. average of \$30,472. This difference is offset by a cost of living that also is below the national average. According to the first quarter 2002 cost of living survey by the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association, the average of general living costs in Nebraska communities surveyed was 94.2 percent of the national average.

NEBRASKA DATABOOK

Much of the above information and other data on Nebraska can be seen in the Nebraska Databook, accessible via the Department of Economic Development's home page at:

<http://www.neded.org>

❖ 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.

FY01-02 HIGHLIGHTS

- 29 businesses and nonprofit organizations shared \$8.302 million in economic development grants, leveraging an additional \$36 million and creating 1,000 jobs.
- \$337,600 CDBG funds went to 22 local governments for implementing plans that would ultimately lead to further growth and development.
- 14 community betterment organizations received \$250,000 in state tax credits to assist with development of more than \$7 million worth of projects, including libraries, museums, youth programs, homeless programs, housing projects and recreational activities.
- 65 communities were assisted through the Nebraska Community Improvement Program.
- 10 public works projects were funded with \$2.1 million CDBG funds.

Communities and nonprofit organizations are encouraged to enlist services and funding offered through the department to help them plan for their future needs.

NEBRASKA COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (NCIP)

NCIP provides statewide recognition for outstanding community and economic development efforts, and assisted 65 communities with planning and implementing projects during FY 2001-2002. Another 30 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 FY01-02, 14 community betterment organizations received \$250,000 in state tax credits to assist with development of more than \$7 million worth of projects.

WATER/WASTEWATER AND PUBLIC WORKS

A multi-agency joint review and funding process for water/wastewater projects handled eight projects, funded with \$2 million CDBG funds in FY01-02. Ten public works projects also received \$2.1 million CDBG funds.

PLANNING

During FY01-02, the state awarded \$337,600 CDBG funds to 22 local governments for implementing strategic plans that ultimately led to further growth and development. Projects included redevelopment plans, water and sewer studies, comprehensive plans and zoning, and housing studies among other things.

COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Creating quality jobs, retaining existing businesses, and providing assistance to attract new businesses remains a priority for DED. During FY01-02, \$8.302 million was granted to local governments that resulted in loans to businesses and nonprofit corporations. These loans leveraged an additional \$36 million invested in new business facilities, equipment and infrastructure resulting in the creation of 1,000 jobs.

HOUSING

During FY01-02, the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) awarded \$12.8 million to 65 organizations. From Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2001, various entities requested approximately \$20.7 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. For FY01-02, the fund made 96 loans totaling \$848,838. During the same period, more than 3,225 clients received business training. As a result 142 jobs were created or retained.

LB840, LOCAL OPTION MUNICIPAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT

In FY01-02, Holdrege, Ord, Bayard, and Plattsmouth passed LB840. At present, 24 communities statewide have LB840 funds to help foster business and community development. Local LB840 plans allow direct or indirect financial assistance for qualifying businesses in the form of business loans or grants, loan guarantees, public works grants related to a project, job training, purchase of real estate, housing, commercial development, bonding, and capital for other expenses. Recent LB840 projects include: matching funds for industrial speculative buildings in Fremont and Superior; road improvements for a new Plattsmouth business, Pipe Products, LLC; and a source of funding for the expansion of Cabela's corporate headquarters, and the purchase of an industrial park in Sidney.

❖ 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.

FY01-02 HIGHLIGHTS

- Recruitment staff worked on 75 location/expansion projects. Of those, 31 projects resulted in an investment of \$120 million and 1,619 new jobs.
- The One-Stop Business Assistance office responded to 2,750 requests, 390 subscribers to the economic development listserve, and 205 subscribers to the Nebraska Manufacturers listserve.
- DED staff, local leaders and volunteers, and officials from area development districts and utility corporations visited more than 271 businesses in 15 counties.
- 559 employees were trained or retrained using customized training funds.
- The Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership conducted 35 events/workshops attended by 1,695 employees from 429 companies.

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 FY01-02, the office responded to 2,750 requests for assistance from start-up and existing businesses. The website: <http://assist.neded.org> was expanded to cover more topics that are most frequently requested by individuals contacting the office. Nebraska Development listserve subscribers now number 390, while Nebraska Manufacturers listserve has 205 subscribers.

NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM

DED staff, local economic development leaders and volunteers, and officials from area development districts and utility corporations visited more than 271 businesses in 15 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 those surveyed, 71 indicated that they have expansion plans. These expansion plans, along with other capital investments to be made in the near term, amount to \$12,467,450 in new investments.

NEBRASKA WORKS

The Nebraska Works program assists businesses and communities with identifying their workforce development needs, and developing plans to address issues related to recruiting and retaining employees. During FY01-02, the guidebook "Building the Foundations of Workforce Development" was completed and implemented in four partnership communities/counties to develop and analyze workforce efforts; Nebraska was promoted and marketed as a state in which to live and work through the Nebraska Works website, mailings and publications; and labor availability studies were developed, promoted and completed in four communities' labor areas.

❖ BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (CONT.) ❖

LABOR AVAILABILITY SURVEYS

In FY 01-01, DED designed and assisted four communities with labor availability surveys to help them gain insight into their local labor availability, as well as make better economic development decisions based on the number and quality of available workers. Criteria have been established for community eligibility for this survey assistance.

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 access for small business concerns to more than \$1 billion in contractible opportunities.

CUSTOMIZED JOB TRAINING

DED's job training funds provide pre-employment training to economic development projects through community colleges or other vendors. The funds also help offset costs associated with on-the-job training for new hires and retraining on new processes and equipment for workers at eligible existing businesses. In FY01-02, 559 employees were trained or retrained using customized training funds. The starting wage of workers hired and trained for new jobs was \$11.35.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE & INVESTMENT

During FY01-02, DED's Office of International Trade & Investment cosponsored and participated in one governor-led international trade and investment mission to Chile and Brazil; one international trade show in Guadalajara, Mexico; and one trade and reverse investment mission to Europe. Nebraska's manufactured exports totaled more than \$2.7 billion in 2001, or 7.6 percent greater than in 2000.

The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that 11,500 manufacturing jobs are directly related to Nebraska exports, with 4,500 manufacturing jobs supported by manufacturing exports. DED's International Trade & Investment Office, along with various partners, organized 17 training events for export businesses, and made 12 presentations to civic and educational institutions in Nebraska regarding international business and workforce development.

DED also hosted 10 trade delegations from Kosovo, the Czech Republic, South Africa, the Philippines, Russia, the Ukraine, China and Taiwan.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

The business recruitment program works with communities to attract new business 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 other organizations, such as the Nebraska Diplomats and Nebraska Economic Developers Association to call on a number of businesses in FY01-02. Recruitment staff worked on 75 location/expansion projects. Of this number, 31 projects involved \$120 million investment and 1,619 new jobs. Delegation trips were made to Europe, Chile, Brazil, Guadalajara, Mexico, Minnesota, Chicago, Kansas City, the East Coast, the Rocky Mountain States and the Midwest.

❖ BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (CONT.) ❖

FILM OFFICE

FY 01-02 has seen an increase in the number of independent film- and commercial-related projects made in Nebraska. The Film Office has been actively involved with providing location and resource information for a number of local commercial, documentary and feature productions. At the end of the fiscal year, a film industry study was being conducted by Economics Research Associates. The Film Office will use the study recommendations to identify ways to grow this industry that will develop high-wage, high-skill jobs for Nebraskans.

VALUE ADDED ALLIANCE

The Value-Added (VA) Alliance Initiative provides assistance to Nebraska companies that are interested in initiating a strategic planning process, or pursuing new business alliance partnerships that transform existing business functions into significant new opportunities for increasing profits and stimulating business growth. Assistance may include arranging professional coaching services for companies to help them establish and implement strategic directions and alliance strategies.

The VA Initiative also has been building a business network “platform” to help Nebraska companies introduce specific business propositions to qualified companies in Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia. Business development opportunities in the life science industries (agricultural production, food processing and marketing, biotechnology, biomedicine, pharmaceuticals, functional foods, and nutraceuticals), are primary targets, but existing manufacturing and distribution capabilities also are leveraged to gain innovative technology and new global market positions.

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 this 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 and processors 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. In FY01-02, MEP conducted 35 events/workshops attended by 1,695 employees from 429 companies. An independent survey firm (Weststat), under contract with NIST, surveyed Nebraska MEP clients for satisfaction, job and economic impacts resulting from completed projects. The companies reported an average satisfaction rating of 4.0 (on a scale of 0-5), total job impact (retained and created) of 75 jobs, and economic impact totaling more than \$4.4 million. Nebraska MEP also initiated 579 new projects during the year.

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.

FY01-02 HIGHLIGHTS

- Responded to 139,849 requests for travel information
- 22,173 e-mail responses
- More than 540,000 website user sessions
- Media campaign that reached 240 million households worldwide
- 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 \$125,000 in marketing grants to local and regional tourism organizations

Tourism is Nebraska's third-largest earner of revenue from outside the state after agriculture and manufacturing. Tourists spent more than \$2.8 billion in Nebraska during 2001 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 43,700 Nebraskans. Visitors to Nebraska and Nebraskans together made 19.1 million trips in the state in 2001 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 visitors to Nebraska.

TOURISM INFORMATION

In FY 01-02, Travel and Tourism received and filled more than 110,000 requests for travel information. A total of 22,173 e-mail requests were received and answered. Staff also distributed 300,000 copies of the *2002 Nebraska Traveler* magazine, and 175,000 copies of the *2002 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.

VACATION GUIDE PROGRAM

In FY01-02, more than 40 vacation guides staffed selected I-80 rest areas, and a visitor center in Sioux City, Iowa, assisting more than 225,000 resident and nonresident travelers during the "peak" and "shoulder" travel months. Prior to working at the rest areas, the vacation guides toured the state for seven days.

GROUP TOUR MARKETING

In FY01-02, 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 AND TOURISM (CONT.) ❖

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 FY01-02, print and electronic stories about Nebraska had an annual average value exceeding \$750,000.

TOURISM MARKETING GRANT PROGRAM

Travel and Tourism earmarks \$125,000 of its operating budget for innovative marketing efforts aimed at increasing tourism revenues in Nebraska. In FY01-02, 40 grants of \$5,000 or less were awarded for regional promotion, attendance to sport 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. Four new TARGET programs were conducted in FY01-02. DED also awarded one CDBG tourism development grant in FY01-02 through the Tourism Development Initiative.

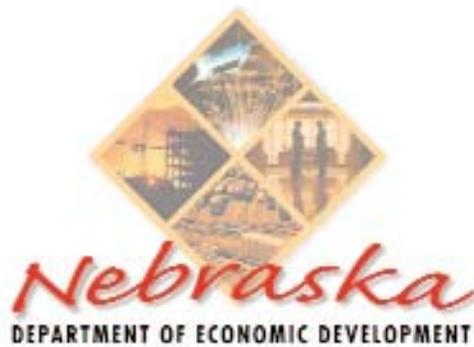
NEBRASKA TRAVEL CONFERENCE

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 more than 200 due to the quality workshops and seminars. During the past five years, sponsors' contributions have increased from \$2,000 to nearly \$30,000.



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