Nor-Am Logistics, Inc. expands into Schuyler

Lt. Governor Dave Heineman, Greg and Janna Brandt, owners of Nor-Am Properties, LLC (Nor-Am Logistics, Inc.’s parent company), and local dignitaries, were present for Nor-Am Logistics, Inc.’s ribbon cutting in June marking its expansion into Schuyler, Neb. Nor-Am Logistics, Inc. is a full-service public refrigerated warehouse operation, with the capacity for storing 12 million pounds. Several major food processors, located within 30-50 miles of the site, are in need of the cold storage services.

Investments into this project are $7.3 million, with $305,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding from DED, and nearly $6.7 million from the city of Schuyler, Prime Bank, and Nor-Am Logistics, Inc.

Nor-Am currently employs 20 people at the Schuyler facility.

For information, contact: Cheryl Brandenburgh at 800-426-6505, 402-471-3789, or email: cherylb@neded.org.

Lincoln Plating earns slot as “Best Place to Work”

The July issue of HR magazine featured the top “50 Best Medium and Small Companies to Work for in America,” in 2004. Coming in at 25 on the “Best Medium” list is Lincoln Plating, in Lincoln, Neb.

The lists are compiled by the Great Place to Work Institute, Inc., a workplace research and consulting firm headquartered in San Francisco. Each participating company earns a score based on two primary factors. Two-thirds of the score is based on results of a specially designed survey given to employees. This year, a total of 18,690 employees completed the survey. The remaining one-third of the score is based on results of a second survey targeting employers.

Great Place compiles lists in 25 countries for 31 groups, including the list published by Fortune magazine, which focuses on companies with large employee bases.

To learn more about eligibility requirements and nomination information for the 2005 list, visit: http://greatplacetowork.com/best/nominations/index.php.
Fellow Nebraska Development Supporters:

I would like to take special liberties to personally thank the many hard-working DED staff who are helping our Nebraska communities and businesses grow and prosper each and every day. Unfortunately, I often get so wrapped up in the next day’s meetings and topics that I often fail to appreciate the good things that DED is able to accomplish in conjunction with our many partners across the State. This reality hit me square in the face as I reviewed this month’s newsletter draft and was able to spend some time focusing on the business and community development projects featured herein. Thank you!

Now to the topic at hand! Several people have recently suggested that DED’s participation in the KPMG Nebraska Comparative Analysis of Taxes and Incentives Report implies we are not supportive of small and/or rural businesses. Nothing is farther from the truth. However, I also strongly believe that the successful long-term growth of our State will require a diverse strategy focused on both small and large businesses in both rural and urban locations.

Despite the many funding challenges in recent years, DED, with the support of the Governor and members of the Legislature, has continued to provide significant financial and personnel support for rural and small business development. DED, for example, has distributed more than $15 million toward the development of affordable housing in Nebraska’s rural communities during the past 12 months. The Governor recently announced grant awards to 26 communities totaling almost $4 million for community infrastructure, community facilities and proactive planning efforts.

DED currently has more than 25 staff members located across the State who focus on development projects in rural areas. During the past six months, for example, our business recruitment staff has helped finalize 26 new projects in 19 towns, ranging in size from Edgar to Omaha. These projects represent more than 2,150 retained jobs and 1,360 new jobs and new capital investment of more than $157 million. Recently, for instance, ground was broken for the new Nor-Am cold storage facility in Schuyler (see cover story).

Similarly, our nationally recognized Manufacturing Extension Partnership program has provided technical support to more than 82 projects for Nebraska’s existing businesses. These efforts have helped secure the growth and expansion of our existing business base and have resulted in increased productivity and capital investment. More than 80% of these projects were located in non-metro Nebraska. Special emphasis has been placed on helping Nebraska’s manufacturers become more competitive in the global marketplace and on assuring the use of the latest manufacturing processes.

In the areas of entrepreneurship and small business, DED and numerous State partners continue to serve as major providers of support and funding for many small business development programs. DED provides significant annual funding to REAP (Rural Enterprise Assistance Program), EDGE (Enhancing, Growing and Developing Entrepreneurs), the Microenterprise Partnership Fund, and GROW (Grassroots, Resources and Opportunities for Winners) Nebraska. DED field staff members, based in Spencer, Curtis, Beatrice, Anselmo, Kearney, Big Springs, Fremont, Scottsbluff, North Platte, Grand Island, Auburn and La Vista, work directly with Nebraska’s smallest businesses on a daily basis to offer professional, technical and hands-on business assistance.

Nebraska has supported and continues to support the varied needs of small businesses and rural communities. As we research, evaluate and develop Nebraska’s long-term economic strategy, the needs of all Nebraska businesses and communities will be considered.

Finally, please help me welcome Tim White of Grand Island and Craig Madson of Lincoln as newly appointed members to the Economic Development Commission. Mr. White is the owner and president of Rinder Printing. Mr. Madson is a long-time banking leader, currently serving as senior vice president of business banking with US Bank.

Richard J. Baier
Nebraska Diplomats, Inc. to host 37th Annual “Passport to Nebraska” Weekend

Festivities for the 37th Annual Passport to Nebraska Weekend, will take place Sept. 10-11 at The Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. The Nebraska Diplomats, a private, nonprofit organization that supports economic development in Nebraska, will be hosting the weekend of events organized to provide attendees with the opportunity to learn about the benefits of Nebraska’s business climate. Activities planned for the weekend range from roundtable discussions to a Nebraska football game.

The event begins with a CEO roundtable, consisting of a consultant panel and business panel. The consultants will discuss what they search for in communities for prospective clients, while the CEOs will discuss their reasons for moving their businesses to Nebraska.

Consultants speaking on the panel include:
- Mike Mullis, president, J.M. Mullis, Inc., Memphis, Tenn.
- Dana Olson, CEO, Economic Development LLC, Bloomington, Minn.
- Phil Schneider, partner, Deloitte Consulting LLC, Chicago, Ill.
- Deane Foote, senior project manager, Real Estate and Economic Development Solutions, Carter & Burgess, Phoenix, Ariz.

CEOs speaking on the panel include:
- Tom Gallaway, CEO, Technologent, Ainsworth, Neb.
- Dave Carmichael (invited), senior vice president and general counsel, Pacific Life Insurance Company, Omaha, Neb.
- Cargill, Blair, Neb. (invited)

A reception and social hour will follow the roundtable discussions. The night will conclude with a banquet, and award winners will be announced in the following categories: Diplomat of the Year, Community of the Year, Industry of the Year, Power in the Partnership, and Ambassador Plenipotentiary.

On Saturday, Sept. 11, a tailgate party will be hosted by Governor Mike Johanns and First Lady Stephanie Johanns at the Governor’s Residence. Guests will then be shuttled to the Nebraska vs. Southern Mississippi football game at Memorial Stadium.

Additional sponsors for this year’s Passport to Nebraska Weekend include:
- Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation
- Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
- Lincoln Electric System
- Nebraska Economic Development Association
- Nebraska Public Power District
- Greater Omaha Economic Development Council
- Omaha Public Power District

For information, contact Lori Shaal at 800-426-6505, 402-471-4592, email: lshaal@neded.org, or visit the Diplomats website: http://www.nediplomats.org.
Governor Mike Johanns has awarded $800,000 in grant funding from the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) to two community action agencies to assist residents in disaster designated counties that were affected by the May tornadoes.

"These grants are designed to re-ignite hope among residents who are determined to rebuild in the communities in which they grew up and raised their families," Gov. Johanns said.

"This funding is specifically targeted toward rebuilding communities impacted by the tornadoes. If my conversations with Hallam residents are any indication, many people are determined to do just that."

DED will administer the grants to the Lincoln Action Program Housing Development Corporation (HDC) in Lincoln and the Blue Valley Community Action Partnership in Fairbury. Each will receive $400,000 to distribute to qualified residents to assist with home repair and rehabilitation. Qualification guidelines relate to income levels and previous assistance determinations made by insurance companies and/or the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Lincoln Action Program HDC will assist residents in southern Lancaster County, including Hallam. The Blue Valley Community Action Partnership will assist residents in Gage, Saline and Cass counties. These four counties were the first to receive presidential disaster declarations following the May tornadoes.

Grants of up to $5,000 for home repairs and up to $10,000 for reconstruction or new construction will be awarded to bring rehabilitated homes into compliance with Housing Quality Standards and to ensure new construction meets local building codes.

Gov. Johanns toured Norris High School and the community of Hallam to see firsthand the progress that has been made toward clean-up and restoration with the help of thousands of volunteers. After he made the award presentation, staff from the Lincoln Action Program HDC and Blue Valley Community Action Partnership were available at the Hallam Auditorium to answer questions and assist qualified individuals with the application process.

For information, contact: Pamela Forster at 800-426-6505, 402-471-4169, or email: pforster@neded.org; Brian Mathers, Lincoln Action Program HDC, at 402-471-4515; or Jerri Kerr or Kim Vicars, Blue Valley Community Action Partnership, at 402-729-2278.
Gov. Johanns announces new tourism and weather kiosks

Governor Mike Johanns announced that travelers in Nebraska will soon have access to 30 new state-of-the-art information kiosks located across the state. Known as N-View, the project will supply travelers with current weather conditions and comprehensive tourism information thanks to a state and federal partnership.

"This program provides an excellent promotional opportunity for our state with potential to generate additional tourism dollars," Gov. Johanns said. "I appreciate the state and federal partnership this program represents and if the interest in the prototype is any indication that partnership is going to pay-off for travelers and for tourism in our state."

A prototype, located along Interstate 80 near Seward, has averaged 100 users per day as it has been tested and modified during the past nine months. The N-View system will include 10 kiosks currently being installed along Interstate 80 as well as 20 kiosks at entry points to each of the nine scenic and historic byways. The 30 kiosks have the potential to influence the travel decisions and routes of more than 500,000 travelers per year on Nebraska's highways and byways. The final decision regarding placement of the 20 kiosks along the Byways will be announced in a few weeks.

N-View is the product of a partnership between DED’s Division of Travel and Tourism, the Nebraska Department of Roads and Nebraska's nine Scenic and Historic Byways. The Federal Highway Administration funded 80% of the project, or $240,000, through the National Scenic Byways Program. The Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism funded the remaining 20% of the cost. The N-View system is one of the first of its kind in the nation to combine travel and weather information on each machine.

DED Director Richard Baier said, "The N-View kiosks will provide an excellent opportunity for travelers to enhance their experience while in our state. This will encourage travelers to explore various routes by providing information about tourism attractions, events and accommodations. I anticipate that N-View will provide a boost in tourism dollars in cities and towns as well as in rural areas."

Tourism is a $2.8 billion industry in Nebraska. Nebraskans and visitors to Nebraska together made 19.5 million trips in the state in 2003 to destinations 100 miles or more away from home.

The weather information on each system will be provided via satellite from the National Weather Service and displayed on weather maps and charts. The touch-screen kiosks are computer-based and designed to deliver information to the user in the form of video, graphics, or on-screen text.

John Craig, director of the Nebraska Department of Roads, said, "By presenting real-time weather updates, the weather kiosk also serves as a safety tool for travelers, keeping them informed and potentially reducing weather-related accidents. Anytime we can improve safety, it's a worthy endeavor and the added tourism benefit is icing on the cake."

The Nebraska Byways Program, composed of nine official state byway organizations, is designed to showcase outstanding archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities along Nebraska's two-lane highways. Congress created the National Scenic Byways Program to showcase and represent the best of America's natural and man-made panoramas, landscapes and history.


For information, contact: Dan Curran, at 800-228-4307, 402-471-3794, or email: dcurran@VisitNebraska.org.
Navigating the New Workforce Frontier, the Fifth Annual Governor’s Summit on Workforce Development, set for Nov. 9-10, at The Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln will focus much of its agenda on economic development issues. The one-and-a-half day conference will feature keynote national speakers and breakout sessions that bring Nebraska’s workforce development challenges to the forefront and examine ways to promote prosperity and growth in state and local workforces.

Richard Hartnett, director of global staffing for The Boeing Company, will discuss factors that employers look for when locating to a particular state. Brad Maul with the Central Nebraska I-80 Coalition will discuss how an area can market its workforce to potential employers. Tony Raimondo, president and CEO of Behlen Mfg. Company, will address global manufacturing. Jenna Dorn, U.S. federal transit administrator, will speak on transportation coordination efforts in conjunction with workforce development in Nebraska. Congressman Tom Osborne and University of Nebraska president J.B. Milliken also will make remarks as Governor Johanns' distinguished guests of honor. The summit will feature many more speakers and presenters as well.

DED partnered with the Nebraska Department of Labor and the SilverStone Group to develop the summit agenda. Seats are filling quickly so register today. For information, or to register online, visit http://www.NebraskaWorkforce.com and click on the 2004 Governor’s Summit icon.

The Nebraska Tourism agri-tourism website now up

The agri-tourism industry in Nebraska is growing by leaps and bounds. There are an abundance of ag-related attractions, events, accommodations, farm tours and more that can take visitors back to their roots, instill a sense of place, and provide a respite from the hubbub of urban dwelling. Agri-tourism opportunities also allow farmers and ranchers an additional avenue for diversification and increased revenue.

The Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism is pleased to announce that its new agri-tourism site is up and running. Go to http://www.VisitNebraska.org and click on “Agri-tourism” to check out vineyards, pumpkin patches, farm museums, threshing bees, and guest ranches.

Surveys were sent out in late summer 2003 to gather information and the listings are as comprehensive as the information that was received at that time. If your agri-tourism attraction, tour, event or other agri-tourism opportunity is not listed, email Heather Sinsel-Hogue: hhogue@VisitNebraska.org to get it listed.

We’re excited about the development and promotion of the agri-tourism industry in our state.
Gov. Johanns awards $385,000 for Saunders Co. expansion

Governor Mike Johanns has awarded $385,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to Saunders County to help Advanced Building & Components (ABC), Inc., a manufacturer of products used by the home construction industry, expand its existing facility. The project is expected to create 19 full-time positions.

Of the amount, $380,000 will be used to purchase and install machinery and equipment to be used in the production and assembly of roof trusses, and for working capital. The remaining $5,000 will be available to the county for loan-related administrative costs.

The funding project is part of a program directed by DED that assists with the development of businesses and communities throughout the state. Federal funds are made available to Nebraska from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG program.

An additional $1.15 million in equity from ABC and loans from Bank of Bennington, will go toward construction of a new 27,000 square feet building that will provide space for up to two new production lines and six production crews.

ABC opened its facility in 1997 with five employees. Today, the company employs 96 workers in facilities in Omaha and Mead. Employees work in the company's manufacturing, framing or distribution centers. The manufacturing center produces component wall panels, floor panels, pre-built stairs and deck packages. Job foremen and carpenters in the framing center install a portion of the manufactured products and finish any remaining rough framing. Extra materials are ultimately sold through the distribution center to complete framing packages. The company also offers turnkey framing packages to dealers throughout Nebraska, Iowa and Colorado. This package includes labor, rough framing materials, component wall panels, stairs, and roof and floor trusses (currently purchased from another vendor). ABC's goal is to become a "one-stop shop" for its customers' needs, whereby the company manufactures its entire package, including trusses, at its facilities.

For information, contact: Mark Werthmann at 800-426-6505, 402-471-3760, or email: markw@neded.org.

Nebraska MEP acknowledged yet again

The Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) was recognized by the National Institute of Standards and Technology’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership again for the center's excellent performance. MEP received the best ranking nationwide for its Investment Leverage Ratio, yielding solid evidence of performance and economic benefits. Manufacturers who work with the MEP center show dramatic improvements in creating and retaining jobs, increasing or retaining sales, realizing cost savings, and investing in modernization, including plant and equipment, information systems, and workforce and training.

MEP is a system of services and support helping Nebraska’s small- and medium-sized manufacturers become more globally competitive.

For information, contact: Carla Patterson at 800-426-6505, 402-471-6513, or email: carlap@neded.org.
Affordable housing at your fingertips with new database

Looking for a two-bedroom unit for your elderly parents? In the market for a four-bedroom, rent-to-own single family home? The chances are good that you will find what you are looking for on the new Affordable Housing Rental Database, recently launched by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) and its partners.

The comprehensive database features more than 1,100 rental properties in over 250 communities throughout Nebraska. People can view all database listings; view property listings by zip code, city, county, bedroom type (studio/efficiency, or 1-5 bedrooms), project design (apartments, duplex/fourplex, or single family homes), or project characteristics (general occupancy, rent-to-own, elderly or handicap accessible units, rental assistance, Section 8, special needs, farm labor or transitional housing); or view those properties that meet a combination of characteristics. People also can find contact information for local housing authorities.

All housing projects and local housing authorities featured on the website have been financed in part by NIFA, DED, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

To make your search a little easier, go to: http://www.nifa.org/customers/project_listings.html

For information, contact: Susan Stibal, director of program development, NIFA, at 402-434-3920, or email: susan.stibal@nifa.org.

Communities chosen to host future Nebraska Travel Conferences

The Nebraska Travel Conference, the premier annual event for Nebraska's travel and tourism professionals, has selected host cities and sites through 2008.

The conference serves as a venue for showcasing new and updated information, techniques, and education related to the U.S. travel industry and more specifically, as it applies to travel and tourism professionals and tourism attractions and activities in communities throughout Nebraska.

Gering is hosting this year's Nebraska Travel Conference, Oct. 19-20. In 2005, the conference will be held in Grand Island, Oct. 19-20, at the Midtown Holiday Inn. Planning is underway to incorporate the conference’s 30th anniversary in the activities and events.

During subsequent years, the conference will be held:
Oct. 18-19, 2006, North Platte, Sandhills Convention Center
Oct. 17-18, 2007, Columbus, New World Inn
Oct. 22-23, 2008, Kearney, Ramada Inn Conference Center

For information, contact Paula Bohaty at 877-NEBRASKA, 402-471-3744, or email: pbohaty@VisitNebraska.org.
NCIP award nomination deadline is Aug. 31

Communities have until Aug. 31 to submit their award nominations for community and economic development projects and programs for the 2004 Nebraska Community Improvement Program (NCIP). If a community has not yet entered the program, they can do so by submitting an intent to enter form and government resolution by Aug. 15. Award guides are available on the NCIP website at: http://crd.neded.org/ncip. Currently, 91 communities have signed up to participate in NCIP this year.

Since 1963 NCIP has been a tool to assist communities to meet challenges and build on the vitality of their strengths and resources to form a vision for the future. Nebraska communities and multi-communities with populations of 50,000 or less are eligible to participate. The program recognizes communities annually for their improvement efforts during the past year, with an emphasis on the achievements of grassroots volunteers.

By participating in NCIP and involving citizens in planning efforts, communities have successfully accomplished many projects, including developing technology centers and recycling programs, promoting regional tourism, revitalizing downtowns, improving public facilities, developing housing, recruiting and expanding businesses, beautifying communities, and developing festivals, events, and community leaders.

Communities can submit award nominations for individual project accomplishments and/or the overall community development process that encompasses planning, leadership development and a variety of community accomplishments. Youth from participating NCIP Communities may be nominated for the "Youth Leadership for Outstanding Community Service Award" for their outstanding leadership efforts in community service. Communities may also submit a Founders Award for an intergovernmental project or program.

The 2004 NCIP awards will be announced at the NCIP banquet on Nov. 12 in Lincoln.

NCIP is a partnership between DED, the University of Nebraska, and NCIP Sponsors. The following investor-owned utilities sponsor the program and provide funds for judging expenses, plaques and cash awards: ALLTEL, Aquila, Northern Natural Gas, Glenwood Telephone, Great Plains Communications, Inc., HunTel Systems, Kinder Morgan, Inc., and NorthWestern Energy.

For information about NCIP or to learn how to register for the free video conference workshops, contact Lindsay Papenhausen, NCIP assistant, at 800-426-6505, 402-471-2235, or email: ncip@neded.org.

Nebraska Microenterprise Partnership Fund announces 2005 round of funding

The Nebraska Microenterprise Partnership Fund has announced its 2005 round of funding for micro business programs. Funds are primarily used to provide loans, training, and technical assistance to micro businesses.

The stated purpose of LB 327 awards is the establishment of a permanent statewide infrastructure for microlending programs. Individual businesses are not eligible for these funds.


For information, contact: Rose Jaspersen at 402-846-5757.
Gov. Mike Johanns traveled to Hastings, Albion, and South Sioux City in July to announce nearly $4 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for 27 public works and (first round) planning projects.

"Investment in our rural communities is important to the vitality of our small towns and villages and an important element of statewide economic health," Gov. Johanns said. "In many cases, these grants will help to remove barriers to growth or serve as a springboard for additional expansion."

The funds are administered by DED. In all, 51 applicants requested CDBG funding.

Public works funds were awarded to:
- **Arnold**: $250,000 to build a community center for seminars, meetings, youth activities and receptions.
- **Atkinson**: $250,000 to build a new public library to serve Atkinson and surrounding communities.
- **Blue Springs**: $250,000 to conduct drainage work and pave 24 blocks of gravel streets, nearly completing the effort to pave all streets within the village.
- **David City**: $350,000 to improve 16 blocks of streets. Residents recently rated the project as a high priority.
- **Fairbury**: $350,000 to replace a brick parking area in the downtown square, replace the existing water main, and replace sidewalks around the downtown square.
- **Hastings**: $350,000 to construct a new day care center, replacing the current center housed in a severely deteriorating building constructed as WWII military housing. The new center will serve 180 children.
- **Kearney**: $350,000 to construct a new day care center, replacing the current center housed in a severely deteriorating building constructed in 1891. The center will serve 100 children.
- **Lyons**: $250,000 to construct a new public library. The current library, located in the city auditorium, has outgrown its existing space. A January 2004 community survey identified it as a top need.
- **Niobrara**: $250,000 to build a fire hall for the Niobrara Rural Fire District serving the communities of Niobrara, rural Santee, and Verdel. The need was identified due to increased tourism.
- **Ord**: $183,000 to replace a concrete box culvert and pave 15 blocks.
- **South Sioux City (2)**: $306,800 to improve streets and drainage and extend a water main; and $122,300 to install a lift station and sewer line from an existing wastewater lagoon to the city’s sewer system.
- **Spalding**: $202,300 to build a new fire hall. The existing hall is too small to house fire trucks forcing outdoor storage and reduced response time in winter months when trucks cannot be filled in advance due to freezing.

First-round planning funds were awarded to:
- **Atkinson**: $25,000 to increase the capacity of Atkinson and Stuart to engage in community and economic development. The project will incorporate strategies for fostering community leadership, expanding financial resources, attracting youth, and assisting local entrepreneurs.
- **Beaver Crossing**: $7,200 to undertake the Beaver Crossing Comprehensive Planning Process. The process will update the village’s comprehensive development plan, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations.
- **Boone County**: $20,100 for a comprehensive economic development strategy that will help create and retain low- to moderate-income level jobs, leading to a more stable and diversified economy.
- **DeWitt**: $10,200 to undertake the DeWitt Comprehensive Planning
(2004 CDBG awards — cont. from pg. 10)

Process. The process will update the village's comprehensive development plan, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations.

**Fremont**: $12,500 to conduct a housing market study to assess the need for individual and family housing for all income levels.

**Guide Rock**: $25,000 to undertake the South Central Capacity Building Project to assess community needs in Alma, Blue Hill, Campbell, Chester, Fairfield, Gilead, Giltner, Guide Rock, Hubbell, Lawrence, Nelson, Orleans, Republican City and Reynolds.

**Hazard**: $11,250 to undertake a drainage system study that will pinpoint problems and outline cost-effective remedies.

**Louisville**: $11,000 to undertake the Louisville Drainage Improvement Study, a reconnaissance-level hydraulic evaluation of the city's primary drainage ditch, Mills Creek.

**Loup City**: $21,750 for a strategic economic development plan that includes creation of countywide business and recreation service directories, a marketing brochure, an enhanced community website, and an industrial site team report.

**Palisade**: $40,000 for a water and wastewater system planning project that will involve the towns of Maywood, Curtis, Moorefield, Farnam, Eustis, Lebanon, Bartley, Indianola, Palisade, Stratton and Trenton.

**Platte Center**: $12,000 to develop the Village Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances to help the village better plan for its future land use, community facilities and economic development.

**Rockville**: $5,200 to conduct a drainage system study that will map existing drainage structures and identify problem areas, possible improvements, and degree of flood mitigation.

**Snyder**: $11,250 to update a 1986 comprehensive plan and zoning regulations and address the growing development needs of local industries.

**Thurston County**: $25,000 for a drainage system study that will recommend solutions to address periodic runoff and flooding problems in the village of Macy.

Record number of applicants for The Edgerton Award

Eleven Nebraska businesses are submitting applications for the state's highest award for quality and continuous improvement, The Edgerton Award. This is the most applications received in a single year. More than 30 Nebraska businesses have received Edgerton Awards during the past 10 years. Six applicants this year are in the healthcare industry, five in manufacturing, and one in professional services.

Governor Johanns will announce recipients of The Edgerton Award on Oct. 29 in Lincoln. Prior to the awards ceremony, each applicant will undergo an intensive review by a team of outside examiners. Areas of review will include: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resource focus, product and service process, and business results.

“The diversity of businesses, from manufacturing to health care, reflects the meaningfulness of this prestigious quality award for all Nebraska businesses,” said Carla Patterson, DED business development director.

The Edgerton Award was founded in 1993 and is sponsored by the Nebraska Section of the American Society for Quality, the Nebraska Diplomats and the Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance. The Manufacturing Extension Partnership within DED administers The Edgerton Award program.

For information on The Edgerton Award program, contact Jenne Rodriguez at 800-426-6505, 402-471-3745, email: jenne@neded.org, or visit the Edgerton website: http://assist.neded.org/edgerton/
Gov. Johanns announces $505,000 grant to assist North Platte business

Gov. Mike Johanns announced that the city of North Platte will receive $505,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to assist in the development of a new business expected to bring 40 full-time positions to the community.

"I am very pleased. This grant will help open the door for new jobs in North Platte," Gov. Johanns said. "It is yet another example of how we are building economic strength one business at a time through a statewide vision of development."

The funds will be loaned to Advantage Direct Communications, Inc., to purchase the equipment needed for a new call center. The company opened its first Nebraska call center in 2003 in Valentine where it employs 35 people. Employees conduct phone surveys and fundraising for corporations, nonprofit and political organizations, and trade associations.

Gov. Johanns added, "I visited Valentine shortly after the call center opened there and community leaders were very pleased. When I toured the call center, employees also were enthusiastic. If those discussions are any indication, North Platte will be very pleased with its new employer."

In addition to the state grant, Advantage Direct Communications, Inc. and G. E. Capital will invest $650,000 in equipment and working capital to open the center. Company officials expect the center to be operational within 60 days.

The project funding is part of a program directed by DED that assists with the development of businesses and communities across the state. The federal funds are made available to Nebraska by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG program.

For information, contact: Dave Gilfillan at 402-223-6654, or email: dgifillan@neded.org.