

NEBRASKA Development News

NEBRASKA
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DED

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A PERFECT BLEND: OSHKOSH, NEBRASKA RESIDENTS AND MARK FERRARI SPECIALTY COFFEES COMPANY EXECUTIVES PROUD OF THEIR ARTISAN ROASTED COFFEES



Cups of steaming Kona Coffee, Crème Brulee and Hazelnut Supreme (to name just a few flavors) are raised around Oshkosh in joyful thanks for the story of Scottsdale, Arizona resident and Oshkosh native son Mike Piva and Arizona-by-way-of-Hawaii transplant Mark Ferrari, whose business partnership led them to Oshkosh's main street. It was there in August '07 that Mark Ferrari Specialty Coffees started roasting and bagging its pure, blended, and flavored coffees.

Their 5,000-sq.-ft. building houses one of the world's finest roasting systems manufactured in Italy, an industrial grinder capable of grinding 500 lbs of fresh coffee per hour, a flavor mixer system (to blend flavored coffees), a weigh and fill (to dispense specified amounts of coffee), a conveyer sealer system, and pallets stacked high with burlap bags filled with green gold—(Arabica coffee beans) trucked in from Central and South America, Asia, Africa, and Kona beans direct from Ferrari's family coffee

plantation in Holualoa, Hawaii.

Ferrari, who earned his Roastmaster designation from one of Hawaii's most notable and foremost Master Coffee Roasters, skill-

fully roasts small batches of the high quality beans, which allows him full quality control. Depending on the type and style of coffee, beans may be 100% pure (as is the Ferrari Estate Kona coffee), or blended with

other Arabica beans and then roasted. The blended coffee beans are then either ground or left whole bean and bagged. Flavored coffees undergo an extra flavoring step after being ground.

In the seven months since it opened the Oshkosh facility and its seven employees have produced more than 110,000 lbs. of ground and whole bean coffees. The Nebraska facility has taken over the company's national and Canadian accounts.

The coffee is initially shipped to customer's distribution centers on both East and West coasts, in Nevada and Illinois, and then sold in grocery, department, gift and



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specialty stores throughout the U.S. and Canada, selected Häagen-Daz® Ice Cream Shops in Arizona and California, and select Costco stores. Currently, the only Nebraska retail location that sells the coffees is Budaroo's Florist in Oshkosh, which does a brisk business.

"Amazingly, they've sold numbers comparatively to some of our busier stores in the Scottsdale, Ariz. area," said Piva.

"It opened my eyes to not only how very happy and proud the community is that it's produced here in town, but how fully supportive they are of

Mark and me locating our company here."

All Ferrari coffees come in striking black bags covered with bright yellow coffee beans and vines and catchy wording that literally grabs peoples' attention in stores. The company also produces "private label" coffees for other coffee companies.

"We really haven't gone out and advertised [since] we've gotten tremendous feedback from our coffees' placement in stores. We've had major companies and media contact us [because they're] intrigued by the bag and all the information [on it]," said Piva. "Several weeks ago, we were con-

tacted by one of the largest corporations in the world [after] they spotted our bags [in a Scottsdale grocery store]. They bought one bag of each style [coffee] and now they want to do business with us."

With the company's rapid growth came the realization that they needed to move into a larger facility and soon.

"I remember bringing up the Oshkosh idea to Mark



and he said 'Man, it isn't easy to get there—logistics and expense,' so we continued to look at buildings [in the Phoenix area] and we needed

to be taking the next step," Piva said. "Buildings here in Phoenix are so expensive and they were basically empty—I wasn't ready to take that on. The risk was lower in Nebraska. I knew people we could hire to contract the work done and to work for us."

Another concern was the costs of shipping green coffee to Nebraska compared with Arizona but the two discovered there wasn't a significant cost difference.

"We buy farm direct and also use a broker so we know who we're dealing with, either they're family-owned, or represent the families who own it," Piva said. "We want to make

sure they're good to the environment and to their workers too."

Piva finally convinced Ferrari to at least consider Oshkosh and allow him to make the trip to meet with people who could help make it happen.

"I remember when I first met with the [Oshkosh] economic development group and they were so excited. The more you talked about what you wanted to see happen, the more people caught onto it and things

started building and making more and more sense," Piva said. "Local government leaders, the business community and Garden County residents have been very supportive and generous with their time to stop and introduce themselves to Mark, and it's funny the more we went back and forth, the trip seemed to go more quickly."

They received loans from the Panhandle Area Development District, Oshkosh Economic Development, and a JOBS (Joint Opportunities for Building Success) grant through Lisco State Bank. Currently, they are in the process of applying for a loan through the Nebraska Rural Advantage.

"We own our 5,000-sq.-ft. facility and all of our equipment and have the capacity to grow within the adjacent lot that we also own. We're going to have the building

and equipment paid off so much quicker here than we would have in metro Phoenix," Piva said. "We made all efforts to infuse more than \$90,000 directly into the community by hiring and enlisting local businesses and contractors to refit our production facility".

The homecoming has been especially meaningful for Piva.

After attending Kearney State College he moved to Scottsdale in 1986 and became a solutions analyst with Nationwide

Insurance Company. Yet he always came "home" to Oshkosh. While his brother lives in California and sister in Minnesota, and even though he'd lived in Arizona for 20 years, people still greeted him like he'd never left. His father still lives there and regularly stops to 'check up on everyone' at the plant.

How Piva and Ferrari met and became business partners is a fascinating story in itself and good for at least another cuppa joe in its telling.

Piva, Ferrari and Ferrari's sister seemed to keep showing up in the same social circles, and in turn, became fast friends. Ferrari, who with his sister started up and ran Hawaiian Mountain Gold Coffee Company in 1986 in Holualoa, Hawaii, left the thriving business so he could explore other ventures on



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the mainland. An invitation to visit the Ferrari family coffee and macadamia nut "farm" in Hawaii in 1997 proved not only transformative for Piva, who became fascinated with the coffee industry, but re-ignited Ferrari's interest in coffee production.

"They said 'Come visit us on the farm.' I grew up on a farm and know about farms, so I actually went over there for about three weeks. We got there so late that I couldn't see much beyond the winding

drive up to their home. His family lives on a side of a mountain and the coffee plantation surrounds it, but you don't know it's a coffee plantation because it's all under the canopy of a jungle," Piva said. "The first morning I woke up in this bedroom that opened up onto a large veranda with an ocean view of yachts. I said 'This is NO farm!'"

The two partnered to initially expand the Hawaiian Mountain Gold coffee brand into markets throughout the U.S. and Canada. In 2003, they established Mark Ferrari Specialty Coffees, a coffee roaster, wholesaler and distributor. Piva continued to work both at Nationwide Insurance, and at Mark Ferrari Coffees, where he, as vice president, handled daily accounting and assisted with local and national promotions until January 2008 when he finally felt he was in a position to devote himself 100 percent to Ferrari Specialty Coffees.

"In a time when many businesses choose to leave rural America, we chose the contrary," Piva said.

"We've been very pleased with the skills, talent, and craftsmanship in Garden County. It's great to be home again!"

What's on the horizon for Mark Ferrari Specialty Coffees? The company has plans to open its own retail store this summer! Along with freshly bagged coffees available to

the public, the company will also offer fresh brewed coffees, selected baked goods and gift items. Keep your eyes peeled to area media as to

their progress and estimated grand opening date!

For information, call 602-799-5921, or email: mikepiva@cox.net, or visit their Web site: www.markferraricoffee.com



Many adjectives used to describe wine are also used to describe coffees and coffee blends.

"When you're 'cupping' coffee, you're taste testing. You 'cup' after each roast because similar to grape crops and wine production, your different coffee bean crops take on aspects of where it was raised, for example, whether it went through a dry season or rainy season, etc."

-Mike Piva

A sampling of other terms includes:

- **Acidity**—The first flavor impression of a coffee.
- **Arabica**—Considered superior, Arabica beans are High Grown (HG—2,000-4,000 feet above sea level) or Strictly High Grown (SHG—4,000+ feet above sea level) in the mountains and make up about 70 percent of world coffee production.
- **Brightness**—Coffee's crisp, first flavor impression.
- **Chocolaty**—Flavor is reminiscent of rich, sweet chocolate.
- **Earthy**—Flavor that brings to mind clean, fresh-turned earth.
- **Finish**—Aftertaste that remains when coffee is swallowed.
- **Fruity**—Aroma or flavor reminiscent of fruit, typically cherries and berries.
- **Wild**—Coffee that is extremely fruity flavored.
- **Winey**—Full-bodied coffee with distinctive dry, tangy acidity similar to a fine red wine.

KOREAN AMBASSADOR LEE TAE-SIK VISITS NEBRASKA



Gov. Dave Heineman recently met with South Korean Ambassador Lee Tae-sik during a visit to Nebraska. The two discussed business development opportunities in the state, as well as trade issues impacting Nebraska.

"I was pleased to have the chance to meet and visit with Ambassador Lee," Gov. Heineman said. "Our meeting provided an opportunity to discuss beef exports in particular. Prior to banning U.S. beef in 2003, South Korea was Nebraska's second largest market for beef. Ensuring equal access for all beef products is a very important issue for our state as we work to expand Nebraska's presence in international markets. Ambassador Lee indicated this is an important issue to resolve and I am hopeful that ongoing work at the federal level will be successful in opening the door to a wider variety of products in the near future."

Following a morning meeting, the Governor hosted a luncheon welcoming Ambassador Lee to the state, which was attended by Nebraska officials, business and economic development representatives, and commodity group leaders. Representatives of several Korean War veterans' organizations were also in attendance and were recognized by Ambassador Lee for their contributions to his country in the 1950s.

In addition to importing Nebraska beef and pork products, Korea imports goods produced by more than 40 Nebraska companies. Nebraska's exports to South Korea grew by more than \$40 million last year to \$127 million, making it the state's sixth largest international export market.

The Governor extended an invitation for Korean companies to participate in the state's upcoming reverse trade mission, planned for Sept. 10 - 13. The event will provide international companies with the opportunity to see firsthand the quality products, goods and services produced in Nebraska and promote opportunities for

new investment in the state.

Gov. Heineman said, "This meeting provided Nebraska businesses already doing business in Korea with the chance to make an important connection. I appreciate the time Ambassador Lee spent with us, and we look forward to exploring future opportunities for collaboration between the Republic of Korea and the state of Nebraska."

For information, contact Susan Rouch at 402-471-4668 or susan.rouch@nebraska.gov

DED CALENDAR - MAY 2008

April 30-May 2: Neb. Economic Developers Association Spring Conference, Nebraska City, www.neda1.org

May 2-3: 2008 Nebraska Trails Council Conference, Grand Island, contact conference chair Steve Paustian at spaustian@grand-island.com

May 5: Nebraska Diplomats Business and Industry Recognition Day, Grand Island, www.nediplomats.org

May 7: NCIP Workshop, 6-8 p.m. in Laurel, www.neded.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=718

May 13-16: CDBG Recertification Trainings (for people who are currently Neb. CDBG Certified Administrators), Lincoln:

May 13, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. - Labor Standards

May 13, 1-5 p.m. - Prepare for DED Monitor Visit

May 14, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. - Environmental

May 15, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. - Financial, Audit, Closeout

May 16, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. - Recertification

www.neded.org/content/view/117/243

DED's events calendar also is available on the Web at: www.neded.org/component/option.com_extcalendar/Itemid,29/extmode,cal/date,2008-05-01/

NEW EMAILS AT DED

DED's email addresses have changed to firstname.lastname@nebraska.gov, to coordinate with the changes within the state system.

For example, DED's director, Richard Baier, at richard.baier@nebraska.gov.

All DED staff contact information can be found on the Web at www.neded.org/content/view/21/37/

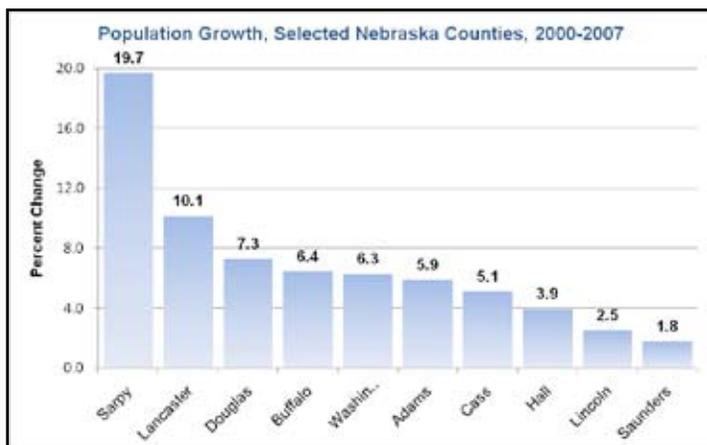
COUNTY POPULATION ESTIMATES

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released county population estimates for 2000 to 2007. There were few surprises in the Nebraska estimates – the state's largest counties got larger and most of the rest got smaller. Overall, the state's population grew from a 2000 Census count of 1,711,263 to an estimated 1,774,571, or by 3.7 percent between 2000 and 2007. That was half the national growth rate of 7.2 percent. Nebraska ranked thirty-third nationally in its 2000 to 2007 population growth rate.

The three fastest growing counties in Nebraska – Sarpy, Lancaster, and Douglas – are also the three most populated counties in the state. Based on the 2007 estimates, they contain 52 percent of total state population. As the graph below shows, Sarpy County had far and

away the largest growth rate at 19.7 percent, but Douglas County with a 7.3 percent growth rate added the most new residents with over 32,000. Douglas' lower growth rate is a result of its larger initial population vis a vis Sarpy and Lancaster counties.

Only eight of the top ten growth counties exceeded the state average growth rate of 3.7 percent, indicating again that population growth was highly concentrated. Although the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas dominated the list of top ten growth counties, the inclusion of Buffalo, Adams, and Hall counties in that list shows that central Nebraska attracts new residents, too. Many of new residents in Buffalo and Adams counties may be students attending college or former residents of more western Nebraska counties.



APPLY NOW FOR BECA GRANT FUNDS APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, MAY 9

In today's economy, getting the most bang for the buck is a challenge to put it mildly. Yet the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act (BECA) grants awarded to date are actually reshaping people's thinking and whole approach to effecting positive community and economic growth and development with available resources.

BECA, based on the premise that when organizations unite for a common cause and pool their resources, great things really can and do happen, is not only paying cost-saving dividends, but more intangible benefits, such as long-lasting partnerships and dream projects coming true for an entire region.

So what about your region? Are there projects you want to

accomplish? Are there organizations that can come together to help you accomplish them?

Now is the time to apply for the second application cycle of BECA grants for FY2007-2008. The BECA program, which is part of the Nebraska Advantage package, is funded by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and administered by the Nebraska Rural Development Commission.

The application deadline is Friday, May 9, noon, Central Daylight Time. To apply online, go to: www.ruralnebraska.info

For more information on BECA, or the application process, contact Linda Fettig at 308-749-2291, or email: linda.fettig@nebraska.gov

RENEWABLE FUELS TECHNOLOGY CERTIFICATE OFFERED AT NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

RENEWABLE FUELS NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2008

All six Nebraska community colleges have formally agreed to offer a certificate option in renewable fuels technology. Individuals can earn a 17-hour certificate upon successful completion of coursework that includes: Ethanol Process Fundamentals, Mechanical Fundamentals, Piping and Instrumentation Diagrams, Fundamentals of Electricity and Lab, Process Dynamics, Microbial Ecology and Lab, and Instrumentation and Control. Many of the colleges also will offer the coursework online. To find out what colleges offer in your area, call:

Central Community College: 1-877-222-0780

Metropolitan Community College: 1-800-228-9553

Mid-Plains Community College: 1-800-658-4348

Northeast Community College: 1-800-348-9033

Southeast Community College: 1-800-642-4075

Western Nebraska Community College: 1-800-348-4435

RUSTIC...COUNTRY...HISTORICAL... NEBRASKA'S B&BS OFFER A GREAT ESCAPE



For your next travel getaway, consider staying in one or more of Nebraska's many fine Bed and Breakfasts. The Nebraska Association of Bed & Breakfasts (NABB) publishes a yearly Travel Directory, which is now available. Call the NABB at 877-223-6222 to request a copy.

2008 NEBRASKA TRAILS COUNCIL CONFERENCE MAY 2-3

Grand Island's Mid-Town Holiday Inn is the site of Nebraska Trails Council (NTC)'s 2008 Trails Conference to be held on May 2nd and 3rd. The conference's educational sessions will include a keynote address by a noted trail advocate, and interactive presentations on trail development, operations and advocacy. Off-site sessions will include local trail rides and visits to regional attractions. The popular Friday night dinner and gathering will occur at the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer. This event will include a presentation on the area's historic trails, the Mormon and Oregon Trails. Grand Island's expanding trail system now connects to the museum so participants will be able to cruise on their bikes from the Mid-Town Holiday Inn to this fun and informative event.

Plan to join fellow trail advocates at the 2008 Conference. A conference information and registration packet will be sent to all current NTC members. Contact conference chair Steve Paustian at spaustian@grand-island.com for additional conference information, or to receive the conference materials if you're not a currently a trails council member.

\$125,000 IN TOURISM MARKETING GRANTS AWARDED

Tourism marketing grants totaling \$125,000 have been awarded to 25 entities statewide to promote a variety of attractions and events.

Marketing grant funding comes from revenue generated by the state lodging tax. DED's Travel and Tourism Division administers the program and awards funding in the categories of promotion of local events, regional marketing, Internet marketing, and other marketing efforts.

DED received 56 applications requesting more than \$400,000 in grants.

Groups receiving funding for promotion of local events included:

The Ainsworth Area Chamber of Commerce—\$5,510 for the yearly National Country Music Festival in Ainsworth.

Antelope County Resource Center—\$2,217 for Neligh's Bread 'n Jam Festival.

Kool-Aid Days and the Adams County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)—\$5,000 for Kool-Aid Days in Hastings.

The Lincoln CVB—\$8,579 for Market to Market Relay from Omaha to Lincoln.

Mid-Nebraska Community Center—\$5,652 for Accordion Jamboree Festival in Grand Island.

Nebraska Kennel Club—\$6,052 for 2008 Total Dog Experience in Omaha.

The Original Town Association—\$7,026

for North Platte Rail Fest.

Schilling Bridge Winery & Microbrewery—\$2,845 to Pawnee City to promote events hosted at the winery.

The York Area Chamber of Commerce—\$4,020 to help with State Hand Cornhusking Contest in York.

The 17 Ranch Winery—\$3,690 for Blue Water Blues Festival in Lewellen.

Groups receiving grants promoting regional attractions included:

The Lincoln Highway Scenic & Historic Byway—\$6,000 to promote byway.

Metro Region—\$6,554 for seven counties included in Lincoln and Omaha metro areas to promote birding attractions and activities.

Shannon Trail Promoters—\$4,380 to promote events and attractions in Cedar and Knox Counties.

South Platte United Chambers of Commerce—\$4,460 for Chicken Dance Trail promotion of wildlife habitats.

Southeast Nebraska Tourism Council—\$5,000 to promote activities in 12-county area.

The Stuhr Museum and Grand Island/Hall County CVB—\$2,895 to promote opportunities for travelers during the Christmas season.

Groups receiving funding for Internet marketing included:

The Cather Foundation—\$8,063 to promote Cather attractions in Red Cloud.

Dixon County CVB—\$3,224 to promote county's events and attractions.

Minden Chamber of Commerce—\$6,700 to promote Kearney County.

NEBRASKAland Days—\$3,645 to promote annual event.

Groups receiving funding for other marketing activities included:

Adams County CVB—\$4,070 for 'Connections to the Past' promotional campaign.

Cuthills Vineyards—\$4,310 to promote winery and vineyards near Pierce.

Hooker County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee—\$5,075 to promote tour and travel opportunities in county.

Kearney Visitors Bureau—\$7,135 to promote local attractions and travel-related businesses.

Sherman County Economic Development Board—\$2,899 to promote recreational activities at Sherman Reservoir and other area attractions.

For information, contact Sarah Baker at 800-228-4307, 402-471-3797, or email: sbaker@visitnebraska.org

DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEES, INTERNS

Matt Davis and Lydia Wiles have joined DED as full-time employees while Scott Lloyd and Leshan Taruru have become part-time interns in the department.



Matt Davis is an Infrastructure Support Analyst, whose work involves hardware and software support and problem solving, network support, system administration, research, testing and procurement of technical products, software training for small groups, providing on-call support and database creation and maintenance. Prior to joining DED, he worked in the office of the Nebraska Fire Marshal.

He graduated from Southeast Community College with an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Microcomputer Technology with a Computer Programming Focus.

Davis' father was in the U.S. Air Force and his family, which includes his mother and two brothers, lived for a time in Minot, N.D.

During his free time, he enjoys reading manga, watching anime and horror movies, cooking, fishing, listening to music and playing

video games with his girlfriend, Jessica. He also is interested in learning more about computers, cell phones and foreign languages, particularly Japanese.

For information, contact Matt Davis at 800-426-6505, 402-471-3063, or email: matt.davis@nebraska.gov



Lydia Wiles is an Economic Consultant with DED's Housing Team where her duties include coordination of compliance and monitoring. Before working at DED, Wiles worked at Nebraska Boiler Company.

She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Professional/Technical Writing with a minor in Spanish from Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, Mo.

A native of Lincoln, Wiles' family, including father, mother, brother and sister, also live and work in Lincoln.

She enjoys reading, writing, and music, singing in the choir at First Plymouth Church and playing flute in the Lincoln Community Concert Band.

For information, contact Lydia Wiles at 800-426-6505, 402-471-4169, or email: lydia.wiles@nebraska.gov.



Scott Lloyd is an intern with the department's International Office. He is working on the Reverse Trade Mission, which

will take place in September, in addition to helping with other tasks as needed. Previous work experiences include everything from selling televisions for Best Buy to working for Ambassador Grover Rees in the U.S. State Department Bureau of International Organizations.

A Lincoln native, Lloyd will be graduating in May from Nebraska Wesleyan with a Bachelor's of Science in Political Science. His senior thesis, "The Impact of Economic Growth on Freedom (Political/Civil)" has taken up nearly "all of the social life I wish I had," however he has a passion for politics and is excited about the future experiences he will gain from working at DED.

For information, contact Scott Lloyd at 800-426-6505, 402-471-4523, or email: ded.bd2@nebraska.gov.



Leshan Taruru is an intern with DED's Housing Team. His duties range from completing basic paperwork to

filing and desktop monitoring.

An Economics major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Taruru anticipates earning his degree from the College of Business Administration in August. In addition to being a student, he has worked for Region V services for five years and served as treasurer of UNL's African Student Association.

The second of three boys, Taruru's family moved from Lincoln to Kenya, Africa, when he was one-year-old. Upon high school graduation, he returned to attend the university.

Taruru enjoys playing basketball, soccer, football, and particularly rugby, which he has played at all levels for more than 10 years and currently plays the position of scrum half on the UNL rugby team.

For information, contact Leshan Taruru at 800-426-6505, 402-471-8575, or email: ded.housing1@nebraska.gov.

MIDWEST INTERNATIONAL TRADE ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

The Midwest International Trade Association (MITA) is celebrating a 40-year milestone this year.

Back in 1968, a group of international service providers, bankers, freight forwarders, insurance company executives and corporate exporters formed MITA for the express purpose of educating, promoting, and expanding international trade for Nebraska and Iowa companies with an emphasis on exports. At that time, the association's programs focused on importing and exporting, letters of credit, foreign exchange, Export Import Bank financing, and U.S. trade policy.

While MITA's mission hasn't strayed far from its founding goals and principles, international trade has grown in ways and at an astounding rate of speed that those 1968 visionaries could never have imagined.

Larry Uebner, MITA president from 1973-'74, identified the most significant changes taking place during the past 40 years as ... "the use of Internet and ease of worldwide communications."

"Conference calling and speed of air travel make international transactions easier," Uebner said. "Many Nebraska manufacturers said they were too busy filling domestic orders to worry about the complexities of selling overseas. However, I believe manufacturers now see the advantages of balancing out sales with international [exporting] when the domestic economy is slow."

Today, MITA continues to sponsor meetings, networking events, educational seminars, and international trade conferences to further the expansion of trade between the Midwest and

foreign markets. This year's World Trade Conference on May 20 will not only provide a historical retrospect of what international business looked like 40 years ago, but fast forward to the future via panel discussions that focus on the conference theme: "New World, New Challenges, New Opportunities." Panelists will include top leaders from different Midwest industries sharing their perspective about the next 40 years.

"For 40 years, MITA has fully supported local companies competing in the global economy," said Jim Grewe, MITA president. "International trade has changed dramatically in the Midwest and throughout the world, yet MITA's vision has kept up with the changes."

More information on MITA, including upcoming events, can be found at: www.mitaonline.org

NEBRASKA ENTERS INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH JAPANESE SCIENTISTS

by Chuck Brown, UNMC public affairs

While growing up in Russia, UNMC's Alexander "Sasha" Kabanov, Ph.D., said he acquired an extreme admiration for the work of Japanese researchers.

His admiration, Dr. Kabanov said, was refined by his scientist father's consistent praise and attention to the scientific contributions of Japanese scientists.

Shortly after the communist's imposed travel restrictions fell in the 1990s, Dr. Kabanov went to Japan to visit with some of the country's researchers.

"I met some very special people on that trip who were doing amazing work," said Dr. Kabanov, Parke-Davis Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences in the UNMC College of Pharmacy and director of the UNMC Center for Drug Delivery and Nanomedicine.

Among the scientists Dr. Kabanov met on that trip was University of Tsukuba's Yukio Nagasaki, Ph.D.

This past March, Dr. Kabanov cemented working relationships with Dr. Nagasaki and other Japanese scientists as part of a partnership agreement the UNMC nanomedicine expert garnered between the medical center and four institutions from the island nation. Both doctors hope the partnership will allow for the successful development of what Dr. Kabanov refers to as a "materials medicine network."

Materials medicine is a term Dr. Kabanov uses to describe the interface between materials science – such as chemistry and physics – and biological sciences and medicine.

Dr. Kabanov and others believe by using nanoscience and engineering, materials medicine may lead to new drugs and treatments for many major health issues.

The four Japanese institutions – the University of Tsukuba, Tokyo Science University, Osaka University and



Alexander "Sasha" Kabanov, Ph.D., signs a partnership document between UNMC and four Japanese institutions while Yukio Nagasaki, Ph.D. of the University Tsukuba (left) and UNMC Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Rubens Pamies, M.D., look on.

RIKEN, a natural sciences research institution in Japan – are home to some of the world's best material scientists, Dr. Kabanov said.

Combining their expertise with the biomedical expertise of UNMC investigators could lead to significant improvements in patient care and treatment on a global scale, Dr. Nagasaki said.

The agreement was signed by Dr. Kabanov, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Rubens Pamies, M.D., and officials from the participating Japanese institutions.

"To become world class, we must collaborate with the best scientists the world has to offer," Dr. Pamies said. "This partnership allows us to do that."

Along with the signing of the partnership agreement, scientists from UNMC and the Japanese institutions also took part in a mini-symposium that may have led some scientists to forge common ground that could lead to future cooperation, Dr. Kabanov said.

"We had a very successful con-

ference with an exceptionally high quality of talks from scientists at all institutions," he said. "The research discussions and poster presentations generated excitement among those in attendance."

UNMC's Luis Marky, Ph.D., and Mizuo Maeda, Ph.D., of RIKEN and the Tokyo University of Science were among those who participated in fruitful discussions at the mini-symposium.

Dr. Maeda is internationally known for his work in attaching DNA to materials or polymers and Dr. Marky is known around the world as an expert in DNA.

"After we talked and exchanged manuscripts, it became clear that we may be able to collaborate," said Dr. Marky, a professor in the UNMC Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences. "We both felt that our knowledge of DNA and polymers would be very fruitful in advancing our field."

WAKEFIELD RECEIVES \$130,000 CDBG FUNDS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

DED has awarded Wakefield \$130,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to help Bonnie Plant Farms expand its national operations into Nebraska. The project is expected to create five full-time and 20 part-time positions.

The city will use the grant, plus \$125,000 in matching funds to build a street leading to and from the company's new plant and flower growing facility. Of the total grant, \$5,000 will be available to the City of Wakefield to help with administrative costs.

This project is Bonnie Plant Farms' first plant and flower growing facility in Nebraska. The company is a subsidiary of the nation's largest commercial plant and flower production company, Alabama Farmers Cooperative, Inc., which serves customers such as K-Mart, Menards, Lowe's, Wal-Mart and Home Depot, and will serve all surrounding states.

Federal funds are made available to Nebraska from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG program, which assists businesses and communities throughout the state.

For information, contact Dave Honz at 800-426-6505, 402-471-3763, or dave.honz@nebraska.gov.



MEET YOUR NEBRASKA DIPLOMAT BOARD MEMBERS

Comprised of 375 members, the Nebraska Diplomats include businesses and community leaders all working to promote the state's great business climate and quality of life.

Past newsletters have featured several Diplomats Board members—meet four more:



Dan Hunt is president of HCI Holdings, a holding company with interests including telecommunications, engineering, and online commerce. He serves on several volunteer boards including the Mid-America Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the Edgerton Education Foundation, AIM Institute, the Nebraska Diplomats, and the Blair Library Foundation.

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and lives with his wife and two children in Blair Neb.



Life-long native Nebraskan and Omaha resident, **Dan C. Park** is vice president with HDR Engineering, and previously was senior vice president and principal with Kirkham Michael Consulting Engineers. He is a graduate of the University of Nebraska of Omaha.

In addition to serving as a former Diplomats president, Park is active on the Omaha Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Mid-America Council of the Boys Scouts of America. He has been active in many civic activities across Nebraska. He is a graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Park is married and has two children and two grandchildren.



Joe C. Ferguson is director of business, industry and economic development for Northeast Community College in Norfolk.

His extensive professional experience includes sales manager for an international Fortune 500 company, business and industry trainer and consultant, community and economic developer, entrepreneurship instructor at Northeast Community College, president of a Nebraska food processing company and small business owner.

In addition to serving on the Diplomats Board, Ferguson is a

member of Norfolk Action Council, Prairieland RC&D, and SCORE, and president of The Lifelong Learning Center Inc., Liberty Centre Services Inc. and The Elkhorn Valley Community Development Corporation (Neighborworks Northeast Nebraska). He has been active in many more civic, economic and community development activities.

Ferguson's educational experience includes graduating from Ohio State's Center for Entrepreneurship Training, University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute, and Michigan State University's Shopping Center Management Institute. He also attended Kearney State Teacher's College and Wayne State College.



Peter G. Kotsiopoulos is vice president for University Affairs at the University of Nebraska where he oversees the division within University Administration devoted to economic development and university engagement, strategic communications, public relations, marketing, and state and federal government relations.

Kotsiopoulos works with higher education partners, civic and community leaders, government officials and representatives from private business and industry statewide to help develop, establish, facilitate and sustain collaborations that will help create jobs and grow economic development in Nebraska.

Previously he served as Kearney's mayor from 1994 to 2002 and on the Kearney City Council. He also operated dry cleaning, formal wear and uniform-linen supply businesses in central Nebraska for more than 35 years.

Kotsiopoulos is a member of the Advisory Board for the Nebraska Business Development Center's Advisory Board; the Entrepreneurship TAG of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce; the Nebraska Innovation Zone Commission; Nebraska Technology's Executive Committee; the Steering Committee of Future Force's Steering Committee; the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board, and the Nebraska Diplomats Board. He also is active in many other civic, economic, community and educational activities.

A second-generation Greek-American, he was born and raised in Kearney, and received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Kearney State College. He and his wife, Jane, have two adult daughters, Julie and Kara.

For information, contact Lori Shaal at 800-426-6505, 402-471-4592, or lori.shaal@nebraska.gov.

BAIER AND BRANDENBURGH EARN CEcD RECERTIFICATION



DED Director Richard Baier and Cheryl Brandenburg, business recruitment manager for DED's Business Development Division, have been recertified by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in Washington, D.C., as Certified Economic Developers (CEcD). IEDC's Certified Economic Developers are recognized around the world as having achieved a level of excellence in their understanding of the tools and programs of economic development.

Brandenburg earned the CEcD certification in 1999 and Baier in 2002. For information about IEDC's certification, visit: www.iedconline.org.

Nebraska Department of Economic Development

P.O. Box 94666

Lincoln, NE 68509-4666

Phone: 402-471-3111

Toll Free: 800-426-6505

Fax: 402-471-3778

Economic Development Commission

N.P. "Sandy" Dodge Jr., Omaha

Phyllis Gardner, Max

Don Groesser, Ralston

Richard Jeffries, Omaha

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Janet Palmtag, Nebraska City

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800-426-6505 or email:

patty.wood@nebraska.gov

NEBRASKA

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The mission of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development is:
to develop economic opportunities by keeping Nebraska businesses, communities and people competitive.

Dave Heineman, Governor • Richard Baier, Director

Gary Hamer, Deputy Director • Patty Wood, Marketing Director • Susan Sitzmann, Editor

Peter Morris, Graphic Designer

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