



nbdc
NEBRASKA
BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT
CENTER

2013 Annual Report



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
COLLEGE OF
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



DEAR FRIENDS OF NBDC

The Nebraska Business Development Center made significant advances in its operations in 2013 despite challenges in funding. For this, we are especially grateful to the significant contributions of our partners—the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Southeast Community College, Wayne State College, Chadron State College and Mid-Plains Community College.

The University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) has been an NBDC partner in assisting small businesses since the very beginning of the program in 1977.

UNK was the only NBDC office to develop a capacity for business valuation and business transition. This service has become extremely important in recent years for two reasons. First, the U.S. Small Business Administration now requires that loans to finance acquisition of certain small businesses be accompanied by a valid appraisal. Second, many rural towns are experiencing the disappearance of businesses essential to quality of life. Most of these could be saved by transitioning ownership to a new generation.

Odee Ingersoll, the NBDC director at UNK, has the experience and certifications to assist with this process. His expertise in this area is sought after by small business development center programs in other states, and he has presented on business valuation and transition at meetings of the Association of Small Business Development Centers.

UNK has also expanded its outreach to small businesses in central Nebraska by opening an office at the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce.

Southeast Community College (SCC) stepped up as an enthusiastic host for NBDC in Lincoln after the closing of the office at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It was a great fit. The SCC Entrepreneurship Center has a small business incubator and was

already home to the NBDC procurement assistance consultant and collaborating organizations (including SCORE and Community Development Resources). In its first year, the NBDC office at SCC exceeded its goals in serving start ups.

Loren Kucera, the NBDC director at Wayne State College (WSC), is widely recognized in northeast Nebraska as the “go to” person for the most complex financing packages. As a result of close associations with his clients and area bankers and economic developers, Loren has been highly successful promoting businesses to receive top U.S. Small Business Administration awards. WSC also hosts Alex Wood, the NBDC procurement assistance consultant for northeast Nebraska. We greatly appreciate Vaughn Benson, dean of the WSC School of Business and Technology, who has been a long-time NBDC friend.

Although it is in a sparsely populated region of Nebraska, Chadron State College (CSC) has a successful history with NBDC. Tim Donahue, center director at CSC and professor of business, has a long-time association with small business development centers, having served as the state director of the Minnesota SBDC. This year, after months of effort, the NBDC office at CSC made an impressive contribution by packaging a \$5 million loan.

The newest partner of NBDC is Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC). After Jason Tuller, the long-time NBDC consultant in North Platte, accepted the economic developer position in Imperial, Nebraska, NBDC approached Mid-Plains Community College to serve the Nebraskaland region. Angela Raby, director of the MPCC Center for Enterprise; Dan Mauk, president of the North Platte Chamber of Commerce; and Ryan Purdy, president of MPCC were particularly helpful in establishing the NBDC office. MPCC extends NBDC services through its facilities in McCook, Imperial, Broken Bow and Valentine, as well as North Platte.

Although NBDC has always partnered with Nebraska’s post-secondary institutions in order to serve businesses throughout the state, these relationships have become even more essential as resources have declined. The delayed appropriations by Congress and the forced budget cuts across agencies (popularly known as the “sequester”) substantially reduced federal allocations to NBDC for operation of both the small business assistance consulting (under the small business development center program of the Small Business Administration) and the government contracting assistance consulting (under the procurement technical assistance center program of the Defense Logistics Agency). In addition, SBA had discontinued funding of small business consulting services for veterans.

NBDC has compensated for these cuts by adding partners, obtaining private sponsors and transferring some services to fee or tuition programs.

During these adjustments, NBDC has maintained high standards of professional competence. This year, Aretha Prodjinotho, the new director of small business consulting in Omaha, and Zack Zimmerman, the new director of small business consulting in Lincoln, each achieved Economic Development Finance Professional certification from the National Development Council. Veronica Doga, international trade consultant, achieved the Certified Global Business Professional credential from NASBITE International.

Also, when looking at the outcomes in this report, you will find that productivity has remained remarkably high. For that we are grateful to our staff, to our institutional partners and to the entrepreneurial enthusiasm of our clients.



Louis Pol, PhD
John Becker Dean
College of Business Administration
University of Nebraska at Omaha



Robert E. Bernier, PhD, Assistant Dean, State Director
Nebraska Business Development Center
College of Business Administration
University of Nebraska at Omaha

GUIDED BY OUR PRINCIPLES, PRACTICING WHAT WE PREACH

The owners and managers of the more than 2,800 businesses who received analysis and advice from consultants of the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) would be reassured to know that NBDC is guided by a strategic plan.

NBDC developed its first strategic plan in 1996, preparing updates annually. Major revisions were prepared in 2008 and 2010, and a special implementation plan was developed in 2013 with Jean Waters, senior community service associate at NBDC, playing a leadership role in the process.

In 2008, the NBDC strategic plan was divided into six strategic priorities centered on the NBDC mission, which is grounded in the belief that small businesses are important to both the economic vitality and the quality of life in Nebraska.

SMALL BUSINESSES ARE ESSENTIAL

Traditional economic development focuses on so-called “primary employers.” These are businesses that sell most of their products or services outside of a community, thus bringing revenues into the community and creating jobs from those revenues. Business recruitment is the preferred economic development strategy, particularly recruitment of branch plants of large and presumably stable corporations. Most small businesses are seen as retail or service firms who sell most of their products or services inside the community. That is, they are

“secondary employers” who benefit from economic development rather than creating it.

NBDC has long questioned this view of economic development for two reasons. First, almost all businesses have both primary and secondary sales dynamics. Some of Nebraska’s largest employers began as small retail businesses (for instance, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Cabela’s, and the Buckle). Second, secondary businesses provide essential services that substantially contribute to the good life in Nebraska. Who wants to live in a town without a pharmacy or a beauty salon or a restaurant?

In fact, recruiting primary employers is almost impossible if there are not secondary employers in the community that make living there attractive to company managers. The challenge of

preserving community has become more difficult precisely because retail on the Internet has made it more convenient to bypass the secondary employers who make communities.

This does not mean that NBDC is opposed to business recruitment. Business recruitment is essential. It does mean that NBDC believes that all businesses, including small businesses, are essential to the economic and social well-being of Nebraska communities and are deserving of attention.

From its beginning in 1977, NBDC has subscribed to a motto that implies respect for the owners of

Nebraska small businesses, belief in their contributions to Nebraska and commitment to helping small business owners better achieve aims to which they are already devoted.

BUSINESS VITALITY IS ESSENTIAL

Business vitality is essential to Nebraska’s economic and social health because businesses:

- Bring wealth to Nebraska by providing goods and services to people, businesses, governments and institutions outside of Nebraska;
- Provide goods and services to Nebraskans that are both essential and desirable for life quality;
- Provide goods and services in ways that use natural resources wisely, thus contributing to the sustainability of life in its many forms; and
- Provide gainful employment that allows individuals to contribute to the sustenance of their own lives and that of others in a way that is dignified, personal and rewarding.

There is substantial evidence that human beings prosper as a species because of their inclination to divide work and because of their ability to innovate. One social structure, and perhaps the best, at facilitating work division and innovation is the capitalistic formation and operation of independent businesses.

However, any social structure, particularly one as advanced and complex as that in which we live in Nebraska, is not subject to individual adaptation by natural abilities alone. Thus, NBDC provides services that help the individual business owner, business plant manager, or prospective entrepreneur understand how to achieve business success in Nebraska. This assistance is specific to situation and may include services from any of the NBDC programs or from any combination of them.

NBDC STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

1 DEVELOPMENT

NBDC will sustain quality services to support our stakeholders, clients and partners through pursuit of additional funding from grants, fees, and donations.

Guiding Principles: NBDC provides specialized technical assistance from impartial, credentialed consultants. No other organization in Nebraska provides a comparable suite of quality services. To sustain the quality of those services, NBDC is committed to continuous improvement through adaptation to changes in client needs and economic conditions, continuous review of NBDC products and services, and development of new products and services.

2 MARKETING

NBDC will tell its story to increase awareness of its excellence, impact, and ability to provide real-world solutions.

Guiding Principles: Support for expansion of services is dependent on increasing the awareness of NBDC successes.

3 CLIENTS

NBDC will focus its services on clients committed to improving sustainability, quality of life and economic growth in Nebraska.

Guiding Principles: Among its services are management and technical assistance and capital formation services for established, growing and initial formation companies. Although NBDC serves a wide range of companies and organizations, its primary focus will be on firms that employ people and provide products and services that improve the quality of life and grow the economy of Nebraska.



4 ETHICS

NBDC will operate with high professional standards based on mutual trust and respect.

Guiding Principles: NBDC provides services under a code of ethics and conduct that reflects its professional standards.

5 CULTURE

NBDC will emphasize collegiality across its programs to better serve clients and to enhance its position as the premier outreach public service unit of the University.

Guiding Principles: The quality of NBDC services is enhanced by creative communications, collaboration and actions that are considerate of others.

6 SUCCESS

NBDC will measure its success by assessing outcomes for our clients, recognition by our stakeholders, and internal collaboration across our programs.

Guiding Principles: The impact of NBDC services can be measured. Focus on those measurements will guide NBDC in building many small victories into a structure of success.

MISSION
The Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) is committed to businesses operating in Nebraska. Our mission is to deliver guidance, support, objective management, and technical and procurement assistance. Our success is measured by business growth and viability.

MOTTO
Helping Good Businesses Become Better

Professionalism and Reflective Practice

Recently, MetapHRases Solutions, Inc., a human resources consulting firm, conducted an audit of NBDC staff and found that of 15 measures of organizational culture, NBDC had high scores on 10 with respect to appropriateness for its strategic plan. On the five other measures the gaps are narrow and are being addressed. What is very clear is that NBDC is true to a culture of professional competence.

Although NBDC values mentorship programs that feature those who have owned businesses or occupied high level positions in companies, it is not possible in the scope of our program to employ such persons. Therefore, NBDC does not presume to prescribe courses of action to its clients, but rather offers analysis based upon professional competence.

NBDC consultants do not rely on business ownership experience to render analysis any more than would an accountant or an attorney or a banker. Instead, we rely on the knowledge gained through academic study and perspective gained from an extensive repertoire of client interactions.

NBDC encourages consultants to develop a system of “reflective practice” as described by Donald Schön, the noted theorist on effective professionalism. All NBDC consultants have advanced degrees in business, economics, engineering or sciences. They have also completed certification programs related to their discipline. And, while every business is unique, businesses share enough in common that NBDC consultants can use prior consulting experiences to inform their approach to new problems.

“This culture combines a pride by NBDC consultants in their own capabilities together with a respect for the abilities of the business owners and managers they serve. It is a culture that consistently brings positive results for NBDC clients.”



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2013 ECONOMIC IMPACT



\$343,055,302 economic impact for Nebraska

\$37,441,685 invested by clients in their businesses

\$169,999,461 increase in sales realized

\$137,350,481 government contracts won by NBDC clients

\$5,243,884 SBIR/STTR awards received

3,411 jobs were created or saved

\$14.90 Nebraska tax revenue for each dollar of Nebraska support of NBDC

2,327 business clients served by NBDC

88 Nebraska counties were represented by NBDC clients



nbdc financial projections are key to securing loan

THE GREEN SPOT, OMAHA

Knowing the source as well as what goes into the items they sell is making The Green Spot in Omaha top dog (and cat) for pet owners near and far.

“Because we’ve spent the time researching every product, pet owners are coming to rely on us as a valuable resource,” says Jennifer Haines, who co-founded the business in January 2012 with her friend, Jessica Ellis.

Haines and Ellis began working with the Nebraska Business Development Center’s Omaha office in 2011. “NBDC helped us with the spreadsheets and other paperwork we needed to secure a loan,” Haines says. “We could write business plans all day, but the charts and reports, financial projections and advice they provided really helped.”



The Green Spot sells natural, holistic and eco-friendly foods, treats and toys for dogs and cats, and provide advice on nutritional needs. They offer a grooming service and a self-serve dog wash. In 2013, The Green Spot added online sales and a pet food delivery truck dubbed “Off the Chain!”

Business has grown steadily, and in May 2014 the shop will expand into the adjacent empty bay, taking it from 1,300 square feet to 3,300 square feet of space.

Ellis and Haines only sell products that they have deemed to be safe, healthy and environmentally-friendly. They sell many locally-produced products including MazzyCo handmade collars and Two Tails Bakery items. They are also dedicated to products that are made with eco-friendly materials such as bamboo, organic cotton and recycled plastics. In the shop, they only use natural cleaners, biodegradable plastic bags and washable rags instead of paper towels.

The two women met through a non-profit rescue operation called Pug Partners of Nebraska that Ellis co-founded. They are involved in a number of community- and pet-oriented projects including Nebraska Rescue Council, Big Dogs Huge Paws, Omaha Rescue Leaders Group, and Natural and Holistic Pet Retailers. They sponsor fundraisers, foster homeless animals in their personal homes,

and host rescue meet-and-greet events in the store. Pug-O-Ween was their biggest fundraiser in 2013, raising more than \$12,000 to benefit Pug Partners of Nebraska.

In 2012, Ellis participated in the Small Business Hike on the Hill event in Washington, D.C., where she served as an example of a business owner who would benefit if Congress were to raise the current cap placed on credit union loans to small businesses.

Haines and Ellis say they hope to continue to grow their business and possibly expand by adding an additional location in the next few years. When they do, they plan to rely upon the expertise they have come to know from the advisors at NBDC.

“They made us feel so comfortable that we have been able to throw ideas at them and get constructive feedback,” Haines says. “When we start looking for an additional location, NBDC will definitely be a resource for us.”



OMAHA 2013
989 Clients
\$8,118,894 Investment
\$43,211,797 Sales Increase
1,346 Jobs



Shurlock (The Green Spot mascot), Clifford Haines, Jennifer Haines, Guppy, Jessica Ellis, Lily, Matt Ellis, Rocky at grand opening.



nbdc helps business grow and pay it forward to the community



WAYNE & NORFOLK 2013

135 Clients

\$4,021,700 Investment

\$31,623,435 Sales Increase

856 Jobs



PETERSON BODY & PAINT, WEST POINT

When people from all over the country need specialized work done on their prized automobiles, it's no surprise they call upon Peterson Body & Paint Inc. in West Point, one of the most diversified automotive businesses anywhere.

Owner Doug Peterson takes immense pride in his 35-year-old business and his community. He is one of the founders of the "Last Fling 'till Spring" auto show that annually brings more than 700 cars and 10,000 spectators from several states to the Nebraska community of about 3,400 residents.

"My grandfather settled here from Sweden in the 1880s, not five miles from where I'm sitting," Peterson says. "I'm about as local as you can get."

Besides himself, Peterson employs 19 people in a newly-expanded facility that covers a full spectrum of auto repairs, from collision service to custom restorations. His business includes an accessory showroom, a vinyl and graphic arts shop, and a semi truck downdraft heated spray booth. Peterson Graphics also offers large format, outdoor and indoor printing, from posters and banners to signage and tradeshow displays.

He says growth has been consistent through the years because of the high-quality work the Peterson team delivers. "To have the equipment and facilities I wanted," he says, "we had to be very good at what we are doing."

Though collision repair accounts for the majority of the company's revenue in 2013, "Restoration is where my heart is," Peterson says.

His shop has restored everything from early 1900s Model Ts to a 1955 Union Pacific caboose. This winter, the projects included restoration of a training model Vietnam-era cruise missile destined for a museum in Branson, Mo.

"It's about 20 feet long," he says. "It shipped here in a 2,000-pound crate from Oregon."

No matter the job, Peterson and his crew put the customer first. "From simple oil changes to the most high-end restorations, every one of my customers is important," he says.

When Peterson started the business April 1, 1978, it consisted of a small, two-stall repair shop. Over time, Peterson Body & Paint expanded to eight stalls and two additional buildings.

In 1998, while seeking financing to expand his business again by building a 20,000-square-foot repair facility, Peterson sought the services of Loren Kucera, director of the Nebraska Business Development Center office in Wayne. Peterson says Kucera has been a trusted advisor and friend ever since.

"I can't tell you how much Loren cares about me, my business and everyone else he works with," Peterson says. "He is the kind of dedicated person who helps make you a success."

Since coming to Kucera and NBDC in 1998, Peterson has been able to quadruple his total sales and number of employees. His son, Tony, has joined the company and handles day-to-day operations.

"Fourteen years ago, NBDC helped give me the chance I needed to grow my business," Peterson says. "That means a lot to me and to our community."





Hannah Schwartz, Jennifer Rosenblatt, Leyna Vick

LINCOLN 2013

332 Clients

\$3,289,501 Investment

\$17,505,949 Sales Increase

572 Jobs

nbdc contributes to accelerated growth for woman-owned business

ARGYLE OCTOPUS PRESS, LINCOLN

Outstanding service and a name unlike any other set Argyle Octopus Press apart in the minds of the Lincoln company's loyal customers.

Owner Jennifer Rosenblatt says she founded Argyle Octopus in February 2011 because she wanted to create a business "that benefits all the stakeholders—the customers, employees, vendors and the community."

"I did my stint in corporate America in my early 20s," says Rosenblatt, a native of Tampa, Fla. "I learned what I never wanted to do again. I learned how not to treat customers and how not to treat employees. I got tired of bad bosses. I always loved being in business, but I never felt like you had to be a greedy entity to be a success."

"So I thought I might as well put all this time and energy into my own business. Above all I wanted to create a happy, healthy environment where work matters and has meaning."

Rosenblatt moved to Lincoln in 2006 so her husband, Kurt Knecht, could complete his Doctorate of Musical Arts in composition at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where the Glenn Korff School of Music is directed by Dr. John Richmond. They had become acquainted when Dr. Richmond served as

professor and administrator at the School of Music at the University of South Florida, Tampa.

Since its opening, Argyle Octopus, which designs business cards and other print collateral so small- and medium-sized businesses reach their customers more effectively, has enjoyed annual growth as high as 150 percent.

"Lincoln has been a good fit for us," Rosenblatt says. "The local business culture is strong and the resources are tremendous."

The Nebraska Business Development Center's Lincoln office is one of those resources. Rosenblatt has been a client of NBDC for more than a year. Zack Zimmerman, director of the NBDC Lincoln center, says Rosenblatt has utilized his office to help develop a training program for long-term employee development, and for financial coaching, advice and strategy development.

"Argyle has met with NBDC on a monthly basis and has been extremely receptive to our guidance, counseling and coaching," Zimmerman says.

With sales steadily increasing, Rosenblatt has hired two full-time employees in the past year. "Argyle continues to grow at an accelerated pace and its success is an example to other women-owned businesses around the state," Zimmerman says.

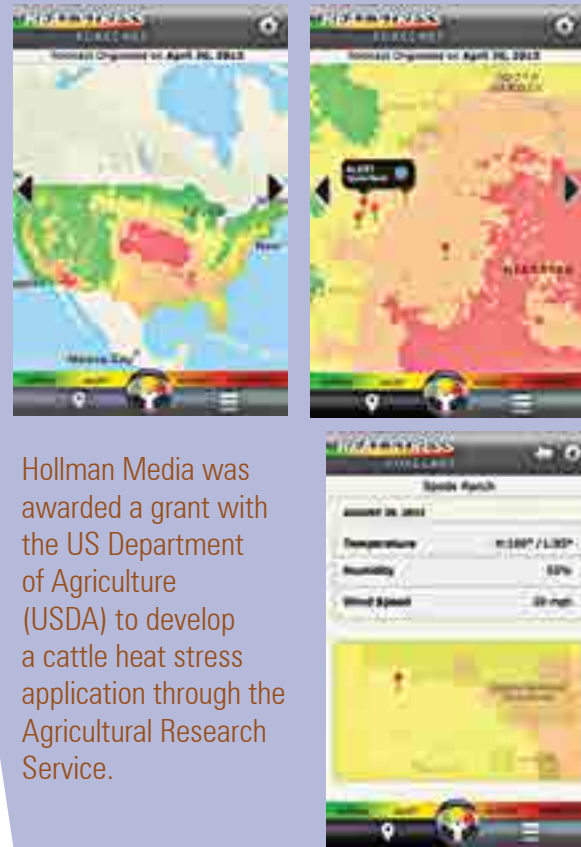
Rosenblatt, who calls Zimmerman "our numbers guy," lauds the services she has received from NBDC.

“It's amazing that anyone can come to NBDC and get high-quality business coaching for free.”

As for the sweater-clad, eight-legged sea creature that is her company brand, Rosenblatt says she and a relative once discussed opening their own businesses and toyed with possible names. Argyle Octopus was one of the suggestions. "When I finally did open my own business, that was the first name that came back to me."

She's happy it did. "They are two of the hardest words for people to spell," she says, "but it's very memorable."





Hollman Media was awarded a grant with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop a cattle heat stress application through the Agricultural Research Service.



KEARNEY 2013
273 Clients
\$7,750,242 Investment
\$15,477,292 Sales Increase
78 Jobs

nbdc finds government contracting opportunities for app developer

HOLLMAN MEDIA, KEARNEY

Hollman Media is taking giant steps toward its goal of establishing the Kearney company as the “premier app developer in Nebraska.”

A little more than a year ago, the company consisted of owner Travis Hollman and two other people. Today, the media firm employs a total of 10 people, a mix of full- and part-time workers.

“The app side of the business has really taken off,” Hollman says. “We now have three people dedicated to app development.”

Hollman Media designs, develops and supports custom websites, mobile websites, mobile phone apps and web apps. The firm specializes in several specialty services, including PickMyTickets.com, an online ticketing system used by the University of Nebraska at Kearney athletic department and other area organizations, an online mobile Rewards Club, and the WeatherThreat.com online school closings network.

The company was featured last spring in a *New York Times* article about an app it developed, My StuffFinder, which helps people locate misplaced items by using mapping, camera and GPS features. Hollman says the app’s popularity soared after the *New York Times* review was published, from about 300 downloads a week to nearly 1,000 a day.

A graduate of UNK, Hollman has begun an internship program that taps into the students in his alma mater’s technology programs as part of InternNE, a state-funded initiative through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development that gives some for-profit businesses financial assistance for internships.

Hollman also serves as an adjunct instructor at UNK, teaching a class in technology and society. “The subject generates all kinds of issues and ideas we can bring up in class,” he says. “We get into some pretty nice debates.”

Hollman Media has moved into a 35-year-old school building that affords the company about 7,000 square feet of space in which to grow. But in order to grow the business in the area of bidding on government projects, Hollman realized he needed someone with experience and good advice. That is where Chuck Beck stepped in.

Beck is a government contracting consultant working out of the Nebraska Business Development Center’s Kearney office. Beck assisted Hollman Media with its federal registration and has been working with the company to identify other contracting opportunities with government agencies.

In addition to government contracting, Beck has been coordinating efforts with Marisol Rodriguez,

NBDC’s technology commercialization specialist, to explore opportunities within the Small Business Innovation Research, Small Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Program for Hollman Media.

“Chuck has been genuinely excited to work with us,” Hollman says. “He’s very willing to make things happen and make resources available.”

In September 2013, Hollman Media was awarded a grant with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop a cattle heat stress application through the Agricultural Research Service.

“Without NBDC helping us, we never would have been able to get that project,” Hollman says. “It’s going to be a pretty big deal for us, the USDA and for Kearney.”



nbdc helps young entrepreneurs build on strong momentum

NEMNICH AUTOMOTIVE, GERING

Just three years ago, Nemnich Automotive was operating out of a cramped, 15-foot by 40-foot shop in Scottsbluff. “We could fit two cars back-to-back, and that’s it,” says owner Erik Nemnich.

Today, Nemnich Automotive occupies a new, 5,000-square-foot building in nearby Gering. The building features six bays for repairs, an office, and living space for Erik, his wife and fellow certified mechanic Stacy, and their dogs, Crankshaft and Piston.

In addition to automobile repairs, detailing, diagnostics, performance modifications and custom dyno-tuning, the business now includes a storage facility on the new property featuring single door access on 20 units and full drive through access on five. Each unit is fully insulated and has motion lights for added security.

Impressive growth in sales since opening its doors March 17, 2011 has led to the need for additional space and two more workers, bringing the number of employees including Erik and Stacy to four.

“We’ve enjoyed well over 200 percent increases in gross sales every year,” Nemnich says.

Nemnich started in automotive work in Scottsbluff in 2001. When he and Stacy opened their first shop in 2011, Nemnich was also working in train service for the Union Pacific Railroad.

Positive word-of-mouth brought in more and more business, and in April 2012 Nemnich gave up the railroad job to work full time with his wife.

“We went from our first shop to a bigger shop with an office in May 2011,” Nemnich recalls. “We took that office and converted it into an apartment for us. My goal was to minimize our expenses and invest all we could into tools and equipment.”

Initially, customization accounted for about 40 percent of the business. Today, that figure has dropped to about 10 percent as demand increases for standard auto repairs.

When it came time to build a more spacious building, Nemnich first went to a local bank. “They wanted to see sales projections,” he says, “but I didn’t have them. They suggested I go see Ingrid Battershell.”

Battershell is the director of the Nebraska Business Development Center’s office in Scottsbluff. She provided assistance with Nemnich’s cash flow projections and with the paperwork for a Small Business Administration 504 loan application for the new construction.

“Ingrid really helped to organize all the data I had in my head and put it all on paper,” Nemnich says. “She believed in the project, too.”

After helping secure the loan, Battershell kept in contact with Nemnich, offering advice and assistance. “It was really neat,” he says. “She even came over a week before our grand opening and asked if there was anything she could do.”

Nemnich says the guidance Battershell and NBDC provide have made a profound difference in his business.

“Even if I would have had to pay for all their services, it would have been worth it,” he says. “Everything Ingrid did was amazing.”



SCOTTSBLUFF & CHADRON 2013

106 Clients

\$9,655,250 Investment

87 Jobs

The Champion of Small Business Award is presented annually to a Nebraska small business owner who has triumphed in the field of business and is an empowering entrepreneur who stands up for other small business owners.

- 1983 Jack Barnhart, Barnhart Press, Omaha
- Robert Hoig, Midlands Business Journal, Omaha
- 1984 Ronald Kennedy, Kessler, Kennedy & Assoc., Omaha
- 1985 Ken Wortman, Wortman Enterprises, Aurora
- 1986 Paul Dutton, Dutton & Associates PC, Omaha
- 1987 Irving Rushall, Scottsbluff Pipe and Supply, Scottsbluff
- 1988 Edwin J. Loutzenheiser Jr., Pheonix Industries, Inc. Juniata
- 1989 Roy Smith, H.P. Smith Motors, Inc., Omaha
- 1990 Carol Corey, Ark Printing & Graphics, Omaha
- 1991 Maxine Maul, Maverick Media, Syracuse
- 1992 Joyce McLaughlin, InterState Telemarketing, Inc., Omaha
- 1993 Bob Campos, Campos Construction Co., Omaha
- 1994 Phillip C. Nelson, Hamilton Telephone Co., Aurora
- 1995 J. Richard Abramson, Prairie Systems, Inc., Omaha
- 1996 Tom Feller, Feller & Company, Wisner
- 1997 Clark Griffith, Medical Center Pharmacy, Scottsbluff
- 1998 Deborah Bass, Bass & Associates, Omaha
- 1999 Kerry Winterer, The Benefit Group, Omaha
- 2000 John and Karen Miskimins, Miskimins Motor Co., Inc., Chadron
- 2001 Jim J. Jenkins, Whiskey Creek Steakhouses, Kearney
- 2003 David Alan Chally, Barney Insurance, Inc., Kearney
- 2004 Patricia Crittenden, Flowers on Broadway, Scottsbluff
- 2005 Terry and Dena Mills, Mills Hardware, Arnold
- 2006 Ervin Eisenmenger, WestPoint Implement, West Point
- 2007 Jeff White, Haque Quality Water, Lincoln
- 2008 Jim and Connie Hellbusch, Duo Lift Manufacturing Co., Inc., Columbus
- 2009 Nick Bock and James Bowen, Five Nines Technology Group, LLC, Lincoln
- 2010 Michael L. Mawby, Come and Get It, Kearney
- 2011 Kelly Newell, Scout Goods & Trade, Omaha
- 2012 Jim and Tim Schneider, S&S Plumbing, Mitchell
- 2013 Douglas Garwood, Garwood Enterprises Inc.dba Cardinal Farms



Nominated by Loren Kucera, NBDC Wayne center director
“Douglas Garwood exemplifies the best qualities of the Nebraska small business owner—innovativeness, tenacity, and deep roots in the community.”

GARWOOD ENTERPRISES INC, DAKOTA CITY Champion of Small Business



Adaptation and innovation have enabled Garwood Enterprises Inc. to find new sources of revenue for the family-owned business in Dakota City, Neb. and earn it recognition as NBDC’s 2013 Champion of Small Business.

The business began as a family farm in 1868. Current President and CEO Douglas Garwood directs the various operations with his son, Scott.

The company’s farming operations consists of approximately 1,400 acres of row crops.

As more land around the farm gradually transformed into industrial operations, Garwood realized an opportunity and began a trucking operation to haul paunch manure from the Tyson Foods production plant across the road.

“We knew that if we were going to grow the business, we couldn’t be dependent on adding more acres,” Garwood says.

Ten years ago, the Garwoods diversified their operations and added a hydroponic greenhouse to grow tomatoes and cucumbers doing business as Cardinal Farms. The 13,200-square-foot greenhouse provides fresh produce to grocery stores and restaurants in the area, and sells to the general public directly at the farm.

Most recently, the Garwoods have added a \$1 million fish production facility. Cardinal Farms Aquaculture will operate in a state-of-the-art, 11,650-square-foot building featuring a dozen

10,000-gallon fiberglass tanks with the capacity to raise more than 90,000 fish at a time.

Garwood says the first fish he’ll raise, once the fingerlings arrive this spring, are barramundi, a large, freshwater sea bass native to Australia and Southeast Asia.

“They’ve only been produced in the United States since 2005 and there are only three other growers that we know of in the U.S.,” Garwood says. “The demand for fresh seafood is strong and we think there will be a good market in the Midwest and beyond.”

Garwood says he has worked through the years with Loren Kucera, director of the Nebraska Business Development Center office in Wayne. “Loren’s input has been very helpful,” Garwood says.

Garwood is active in many community service efforts including the South Sioux City (Neb.) Area Chamber of Commerce. He is a founding member of Siouland Ethanol and serves as secretary for its board of directors.

As for being a champion of small business, Garwood deeply appreciates the honor but says he is simply “doing what I like to do.”

“I think there are several thousand small business champions in Nebraska,” he says.



CERTIFIED TRANSMISSION, OMAHA

Manufacturing Business of the Year

Nominated by Renee Held, lean manufacturing consultant

“Certified Transmission demonstrates how reducing waste in manufacturing processes can be an engine for business growth as well as a principle of sustainability.”

When Peter Fink opened Certified Transmission in 1979, he was a 19-year-old with a dream—and not much more.

“I started in a two-bay former gas station at 84th and Blondo,” Fink recalls. “I had a thousand dollars, my tool box and a \$900 rent payment due the next day. I had to get busy.”

Today, Certified Transmission operates a 106,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Omaha and a 40,000-square-foot plant in Fort Dodge, Iowa. Fink also owns 13 retail locations in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri, and continues to expand through a network of distributors across the U.S. Once a one-man show, Certified Transmission employs about 400 people.

Growth has been fueled by efficiency and reducing waste. Nebraska Business Development Center training helped Certified Transmission increase production without physically expanding its space. In 2011, the company remanufactured 28,000 transmissions. For fiscal 2014, Fink anticipates a record 40,350 transmissions.

Fink says there is a significant difference between a remanufactured transmission and a rebuilt transmission. With a rebuilt transmission, only broken parts are replaced. A remanufactured transmission, however, is hand-disassembled and thoroughly checked, piece by piece. Any part that isn’t up to factory-new standards is either re-machined or replaced with a new part.

“We go beyond by installing factory updates and using materials that have been improved since the time the transmission was initially manufactured,” he says. “That’s why we say our remanufactured transmissions are as good as when they were new—or better.”

Certified Transmission stocks \$1.5 million in parts inventory and owns numerous precision industrial computer numerical control (CNC) milling machines, so even an out-of-stock transmission can be remanufactured in a few days.

Quality is fundamental, Fink says. Each remanufactured transmission is serviced by a single technician. The length of time that transmission remains in service after it leaves the plant is tracked and attributed to the technician who worked on it.

The remanufacturing process is inherently environmentally-friendly compared to manufacturing a new transmission. Certified Transmission takes that a step further, shipping transmissions in reusable, returnable containers. Most other wastes are recycled, including packaging wastes from materials received, office paper, and broken metal, plastic, rubber and paper parts—even broken electrical switches.

“For a 100,000-square-foot facility making 200 transmissions daily, we have one very small trash dumpster,” Fink says. “Our people and partnerships are dedicated to continual improvement.”



The Manufacturing Business of the Year is awarded to a Nebraska business that demonstrates leadership in employee involvement, continual process improvement, customer and supplier relations, innovation and new product development, sales growth, and sustainability.

2011—Overhead Door, Grand Island

2012—Tri-V Tool & Manufacturing, Omaha

2013—Certified Transmission, Omaha



The Business of the Year in Energy and the Environment is awarded to a Nebraska business that has demonstrated leadership incorporating environmental sustainability as a strategic business value that has resulted in improved business performance.

2011—Signs and Shapes International, Omaha

2012—ServiceMaster, Lincoln

2013—The Grey Plume, Omaha



THE GREY PLUME, OMAHA

Business of the Year in Energy & the Environment

The recognition The Grey Plume restaurant in Omaha has earned as a sustainable business is inspired by a visit owner and chef Clayton Chapman made to Togo in West Africa.

“I spent 45 days with my brother who was in the Peace Corps,” Chapman recalls. “He learned to grow a lot of his own food. I learned how to be resourceful and not to waste anything.”

Those are two of many qualities the Omaha native has incorporated into his Midtown Crossing restaurant. Upon its opening in 2010, The Grey Plume was named the first Green Restaurant Association 4-star SustainaBuild restaurant in the United States. The criteria are similar to LEED certification but apply specifically to restaurants.

Chapman has created a dining experience that emphasizes locally produced foods and operates in a sustainable way. “From a chef’s perspective, the best ingredients enable me to put my best foot forward,” he says, “and the freshest ingredients tend to be raised closest to home.”

When building the restaurant, Chapman chose energy efficient equipment as well as locally-produced art and furnishings. He used mostly recycled building materials, recycled barn wood and repurposed fixtures.

Water and energy savings are paramount in the

restaurant’s sustainable daily operations, with half-gallon per minute hand-washing sinks (as compared to the standard 2.2 gallons per minute), high efficiency toilets, variable-speed exhaust hoods, LED lighting, energy star appliances and a 98 percent efficient water heater.

The Grey Plume also has a thorough recycling and composting program for unavoidable wastes. For example, when cooking oil must be disposed, it is used by the Omaha Biofuels Coop to manufacture biodiesel fuel.

The restaurant is not only helping sustain local artisans and regional farmers by purchasing their products, Chapman is promoting his suppliers on The Grey Plume’s website.

“Typically food travels 1,500 miles from farm to plate,” he says. “That’s incredibly inefficient. We can identify the source of everything we serve and pass that story on to the consumer. It’s very rewarding to be authentic.”

For its efforts, The Grey Plume can add the title of NBDC’s 2013 Business of the Year in Energy and the Environment to its long list of accolades.

“We wanted a dining atmosphere and business practices that mirrored our food sourcing,” Chapman says. “We are proud that we have adhered to our values and transparency in business to become successful.”

Nominated by Jean Waters, NBDC sustainability specialist

“The Grey Plume combines a commitment to innovative cuisine with showcasing local food sources and practicing a no-waste attitude in every aspect of its operations.”



LNK CHEMSOLUTIONS LLC, LINCOLN Technology Business of the Year



The research and development underway at LNKChemsolutions in Lincoln is taking place on a scale that staggers the mind.

LNKChemsolutions is a group of engineers who are experts in the field of novel nanostructured materials. Together, they provide nanotech solutions to meet new product performance challenges and create proprietary nanofiber design technology.

Nanotechnology is the engineering of functional systems at the molecular scale. The name derives from the nanometer, a unit of measurement representing one billionth of a meter, or three to four atoms wide. In other words, it is extremely small.

Nanotechnology is increasingly being employed to achieve advances in biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, computer science and mathematics.

LNKChemsolutions was founded in 2000 by Gustavo Larsen, Ph.D., professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dr. Larsen received his bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Mar Del Plata in Argentina and his doctorate in chemical engineering from Yale University.

LNKChemsolutions has core competencies in nanoparticle and nanofiber research and development for a variety of applications such as toxicology, tissue engineering, encapsulation and controlled release.

The National Science Foundation defines nanofibers as having at least one dimension of 100 nanometer (nm) or less. Among other uses, nanofibers are employed in many medical applications including drug and gene delivery.

Because nanofibers and webs are capable of delivering medicines directly to internal tissues, "One of our major thrusts is using this technology to deliver drugs that target specific cancer cells," Dr. Larsen says.

LNKChemsolutions has received contracts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and Kraft Foods to develop new nanotechnology products. The company is housed in state-of-the-art laboratory facilities situated in the University of Nebraska Technology Park in Lincoln.

After transforming the company from a consulting role in 2010, LNKChemsolutions has grown from three to 10 employees. To further its innovative work, it has secured Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants, as well as matching SBIR grants from the State of Nebraska's Economic Development Office.

Dr. Larsen says he is expanding the company internationally with a partnership in Argentina. Within five years, he says, he hopes to "double or triple our personnel, add a production facility, license products to other companies and establish subsidiaries in Latin America."

Nominated by Marisol Rodriguez, NBDC technology commercialization specialist

"Dr. Larsen has not only successfully commercialized an important technology, but he shares his experience with small businesses and new entrepreneurs through seminars, internships, and mentoring."

The Technology Business of the Year is awarded to a Nebraska business that advances technological innovation, partners with a Nebraska university to meet federal research and development needs, or increases commercialization of federal research.

2011—MultiMech Research & Development LLC

2012—SectorNow LLC

2013—LNKChemsolutions LLC

2013 NBDC TECHNOLOGY COMMERCIALIZATION PROGRAM

Clients assisted	63
SBIR/STTR applications	49
SBIR/STTR awards	8
SBIR/STTR awards total	\$5,243,884

CALVIN L. HINZ ARCHITECTS PC, ELKHORN

Government Contractor of the Year



Working with the Nebraska Business Development Center and its Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAC) has helped Calvin L. Hinz Architects lay the groundwork and continue to grow the government contracting facet of its business.

CLH Architects was founded in 1968 by Warren Keeler. Hinz is a Vietnam-era veteran and CLH Architects, headquartered in Elkhorn, is a certified Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business.

“The PTAC office has been extremely helpful and proactive in assisting us to become successful in winning government contracts,” Hinz says.

Although the company has gone by other names through the years, its dedication to quality architectural designs and to its clients and their facilities’ development has not changed, Hinz says.

“We see the effects of our philosophies when many of the same clients return to us through the years with new projects,” he says.

CLH Architects has experience in health care, senior living, educational, federal government, financial, religious, public, industrial and historic renovation design. “We strongly believe in the Americans with Disabilities Act and green architecture and make a point to exercise our familiarity with them whenever feasible,” Hinz says.

Hinz and his firm have completed an impressive list of government contracts for Department of Veterans Affairs, National Guard and Veteran’s Administration facilities in Omaha, Grand Island, Oklahoma City, Des Moines and Iowa City.

Along the way, the NBDC and PTAC Counselor Roger Johnson have been valuable sources of guidance. “Roger is a great ally of our firm,” Hinz says. “When it comes to proposal writing and review, he has been there to provide insight as to how we can do the best proposal for a particular project.”

Nominated by Roger Johnson, NBDC government contracting specialist

“Calvin Hinz and his team are passionate about bringing their knowledge, experience and the newest technologies to the nation’s VA hospitals and serving our military veterans.”

Hinz has actively sought NBDC assistance, and also takes advantage of the periodic notices he receives regarding seminars and training sessions. “NBDC and PTAC have helped us expand our business by their knowledge and mission to promote veteran owned businesses, as well as promoting other businesses to provide quality services and products to our government facilities.”

Hinz says being named NBDC’s Government Contractor of the Year recognizes the efforts of his “knowledgeable and dedicated staff.”

“It’s also fulfilling that we are being honored for work we do with our armed forces, because through it I feel we are giving back to our country for their service,” he says. “We strive to honor our veterans by creating staff and patient-sensitive environments, using the latest medical technologies to improve patient care and promote faster healing.”



From left: Julie Kasl; Dawn Mathenia, Jason Schmitz, Cal Hinz, Kyle Miller, Becky Block, Laurie Hinz, Christine Done, and Bob Ryckman. Not pictured: Nicolette Amundson

The Government Contractor of the Year is awarded to a Nebraska business that is successful in selling and delivering products or services to federal, state or local government.

2011—Dyna-Tech Aviation Services, Omaha

2012—Issues Management Solutions, Omaha

2013—Calvin L. Hinz Architects PC, Elkhorn

96%
of NBDC government contracting clients reported that NBDC assistance was quick and responsive.



David Phillips, global sales and marketing manager, and Jim Glazer, president and CEO

ELLIOTT EQUIPMENT CO, OMAHA

Export Business of the Year

Finding success in the Canadian market as well as throughout the United States has put Elliott Equipment Co. of Omaha in prime position to expand its international business in South and Central America.

The company was founded in 1948 when Richard Elliott developed the first truck-mounted telescoping aerial work platform and crane. The Glazer family bought the company in 1990. Jim Glazer serves as the company's president and CEO.

Today, the company builds more than 40 truck-mounted aerial work platform and crane models, from the original Hi-Reach to the Skywalk and BoomTruck. The equipment is used in a wide array of industries including electrical, oil and gas, construction, signage, lighting, maintenance, transportation, utilities, ports and mining.

"We decided five years ago to expand our international business beyond Canada," Glazer says. "We brought David Phillips on board because of his extensive international business background. He has been exemplary for us."

Phillips says the company relied upon the Nebraska Business Development Center for advice on trade organizations and help securing grants through the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program to overcome the initial costs of reaching new foreign markets. Elliott's management worked with Veronica Doga, NBDC export and international trade specialist in Omaha, to obtain

services that included translating equipment labels and manuals.

Glazer says the company currently does business in the U.S., Canada, Chile, Colombia, Peru and China and plans to expand.

Elliott is benefitting from strength in the copper mining industry in Chile and coal mining in Colombia, Phillips says. "These countries are developing large amounts of infrastructure to sustain their growth," he says. "But they are facing an absence of equipment. In Medellin (Colombia) for example, there is very little equipment available for rental."

Glazer says countries have chosen Elliott over other aerial platform suppliers "because their products are not as high quality or high tech as what we build, and because we are an American family business that builds strong relationships and friendships with our dealers overseas."

The company also benefits from tapping into a network of well-established distributors in South America "who are eager to stock, sell and promote our equipment," Glazer says. "That's why we feel confident about our continued growth there."

Phillips says that in addition to an educational class in the export business and advice on business plans for the various countries, NBDC was a valuable resource navigating the paper jungle that accompanies foreign market expansion. "They really helped us make the jump to international business."

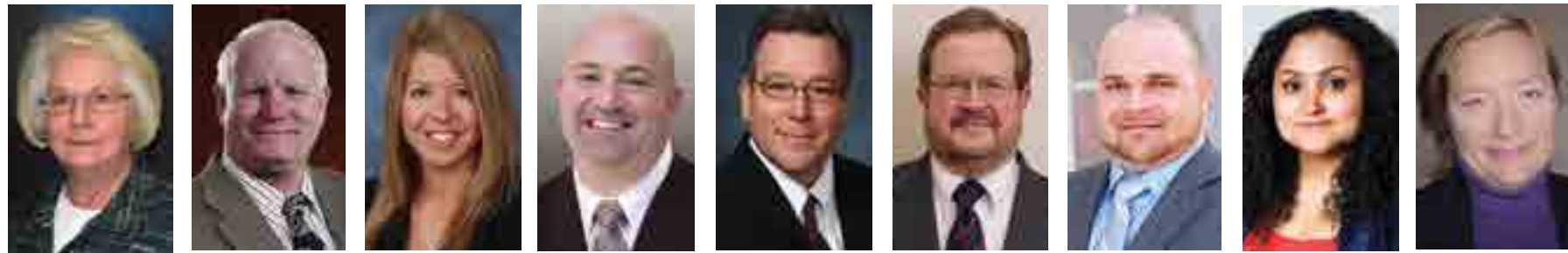


Nominated by Veronica Doga, NBDC export and international trade specialist

"Elliott Equipment is a striking example of how a company manufacturing high quality products in Nebraska can find opportunities for growth in the international marketplace."

NBDC awards the Export Business of the Year to a Nebraska business that is successful in selling and delivering products or services internationally. Elliott Equipment Co. is the first business to receive this award.

Business Plan Loan Packaging Market Research Business Valuation Succession Planning Capital Access



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Exporting Technology Commercialization Energy Efficiency Sustainability



VERONICA DOGA OMAHA | MARISOL RODRIGUEZ OMAHA | JEAN WATERS OMAHA | RICK YODER OMAHA | CINDY WOFFORD OMAHA | HAROLD SARGUS OMAHA | BETH GIESBRECHT OMAHA | KIM HARTER OMAHA | TRACI MILLER OMAHA

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Lean Enterprise Process Improvement

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