

NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW

■ Mayor VanMatre speaks on Capitol Hill
to call for passage of Railway Safety Act

■ Central City welcomes Huskers
to play match in Buffalo Dome

■ Taking the lead: How city
officials can promote civility

Official Publication of the League of Nebraska Municipalities

MAY 2023



Papillion Butterfly Garden

Contents

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About the Cover:

The Papillion Butterfly Garden celebrates and protects Papillion's namesake — the butterfly. This garden provides not only a habitat, but a living classroom where the community can come to enjoy and learn about butterflies. The garden was created in 2020 as a Papillion 150th project, celebrating Papillion's 150th anniversary. The garden was made possible thanks to the generous donations of the Papillion community, and it is sustained by area volunteer gardeners.

The Papillion Butterfly Garden enhances the serene and reflective nature of Veterans Park. The garden features a 16-foot-tall monarch butterfly sculpture by renowned Omaha artist Matthew Placzek.

Image and copy courtesy of the City of Papillion.

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Larger Cities Legislative Committee

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Randy Woldt, Utilities Superintendent, Wisner
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Fred Wiebelhaus	Loss Control/Claims Manager
Drew Cook	Customer Service Specialist
Kyla Brockevelt	Executive Administrative Assistant
James Kelley	Loss Control Specialist

CALENDAR

Municipal Accounting and Finance Conference.....June 21-23, 2023, Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln
LONM Annual Conference.....Sept. 27-29, 2023, Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

Municipal Legal Calendar

(All statute citations to Revised Statutes of Nebraska)

JULY 2023

CITIES OF THE FIRST CLASS

July 1	Chair of the Park and Recreation Commissioners must file with City Clerk an itemized statement of all expenditures of the Park and Recreation Board. (16-697)
Between July 10 and July 30	Advertise for Class C Liquor License renewals. (53-135.01)
Between July 15 and August 15	Job titles and salaries of employees shall be published. (19-1102)
Prior to publication of notice of budget hearing	Council prepares proposed budget statement and makes it available to the public. (13-504) *Does not apply to cities with a biennial budget that are in the second year of the biennial budget period.
On or before August 20	County Assessor certifies to each governing body the current valuation of all property subject to the applicable levy. (13-509)
On or before September 30	Budget Statement filed with County Clerk and State Auditor (13-508) *Does not apply to cities with a biennial budget that are in the second year of the biennial budget period.
Within 10 working days following meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner)	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
Within 15 days of passage	Clerk publishes ordinances passed. (16-405)
Within 30 days following Council meeting	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meetings, including claims. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (16-318)
*	Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Council meeting. (84-1411)
End of Each Quarter	Report from Depository Banks due. (16-714)
By July 31	Clerk files Lane Mile Report with Nebraska Department of Transportation (39-2517 and 39-2518)

VILLAGES AND CITIES OF THE SECOND CLASS

Between July 10 and July 30	Advertise for Class C Liquor License renewals. (53-135.01)
Between July 15 and August 15	Job titles and salaries of employees shall be published. (19-1102)
Prior to publication of notice of budget hearing	Governing body prepares proposed budget statement and makes it available to the public. (13-504) *Does not apply to cities with a biennial budget that are in the second year of the biennial budget period.
On or before August 20	County Assessor certifies to each governing body the current valuation of all property subject to the applicable levy. (13-509)
On or before September 30	Budget statement filed with County Clerk and State Auditor. (13-508) *Does not apply to cities with a biennial budget that are in the second year of the biennial budget period.
Within 10 working days following meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner)	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
Within 15 days of Passage	Clerk publishes or posts ordinances passed. (17-613)
Within 30 days following Council meeting	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting including claims. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)
**	Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Council or Board meeting. (84-1411)
By July 31	Clerk files Lane Mile Report with Nebraska Department of Transportation (39-2517 and 39-2518)

Nebraska Municipal Review Editor and Advertising Sales: Ashley Wolfe, 402-476-2829 or ashleyw@lonm.org

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League President Deb VanMatre participates with other local leaders in NLC press conference to advocate for passage of the bipartisan Railway Safety Act of 2023

BY L. LYNN REX, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LNM

Thanks to **U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Washington)**, Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, for partnering with the National League of Cities (NLC) to garner support for **S.576, the Railway Safety Act of 2023**. On May 17, **Irma Esparza Diggs**, Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy for NLC, began the press conference in front of the U.S. Capitol by thanking Sen. Cantwell for her leadership as Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee which recently passed the Railway Safety Act. NLC selected six local leaders from across the country, including **League President Deb VanMatre**, Mayor of Gibbon, to share a few remarks at the press conference on the importance of the rail industry and rail safety legislation. Gibbon has experienced derailments, including one in 2021.

S.576 was introduced in response to the devastating train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. Like some of the 1,164 derailments in 2022, the derailment in East Palestine has numerous short-term and long-term consequences for the health and safety of the first responders, railroad workers, and residents, as well as the viability of local businesses and the city's economy. The National Transportation Safety Board determined that a wheel bearing was overheating in the final stage of failure before the East Palestine crash. S.576 would address this

issue and other mechanical failures by establishing requirements for the proper installation and maintenance of wayside defect detectors; these are automated devices located on the side of tracks to monitor trains. S.576 would provide \$22 million to the Federal Railroad Administration for research and development grants for wayside defect detectors and \$5 million to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration for the development of stronger and safer tank cars and valves to help mitigate future derailments involving hazardous materials.

U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance (R-Ohio) and **U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio)** introduced this important bipartisan legislation with the following co-sponsors: Sen. Robert Casey (D-Pennsylvania) Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pennsylvania) Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Florida) Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minnesota) Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota) Sen. Mike Braun (R-Indiana) Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah) Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kansas) Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin)

S.576 now needs to pass the full Senate! NLC and state municipal leagues across the country are encouraging other lawmakers to join this bipartisan effort to prevent derailments by strengthening safety requirements and procedures to address factors which contributed to the PREVENTABLE, burning, toxic

train derailment in Ohio as well as other derailments (an average of three per day nationwide) resulting in varying degrees of disruption from inconvenience to utter devastation.

In addition to enhancing safety procedures for trains carrying hazardous materials, S.576 would require emergency response plans and advance notice and information from the railroad to state emergency response agencies. **As Mayor VanMatre stated during the press conference, in most places in Nebraska, it is local law enforcement, volunteer firefighters and other first responders who are first at the derailment site to provide assistance to railroad employees, citizens, and others.** This legislation would increase HAZMAT registration fees paid by Class I railroads to fund training grants enabling first responders and others to better manage potentially toxic and dangerous situations when there is a derailment.

The rail industry is critically important to our nation's economy! Notwithstanding, derailments are preventable with current technology, best practices and ongoing maintenance to protect railroad employees as well as the public. Local governments need Congress to pass this legislation since there really is not much any state or municipality can do to improve railroad safety. Federal legislation to address these significant issues is long overdue! ■



Above: (Front row from left to right) Irma Esparza Diggs, NLC Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy; Gibbon Mayor Deb VanMatre, President of the League of Nebraska Municipalities; and U.S. Senate Committee Chair Maria Cantwell from Washington State who all spoke during the press conference on May 17 about the need for Congress to pass the bipartisan "Railway Safety Act of 2023." Photos courtesy of National League of Cities.

Mayor Deb VanMatre joins local leaders, U. S. Senator Cantwell on Capitol Hill to call for passage of Railway Safety Act

On Wednesday, May 17, Gibbon Mayor Deb VanMatre, President of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, joined a press conference hosted by the National League of Cities and U.S. Senate Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell (WA) on the need for Congress to act on rail safety.

Local leaders, including VanMatre, highlighted their communities' rail concerns and urged the Senate to pass the bipartisan Railway Safety Act of 2023.

Around 140,000 miles of track in the United States cross directly through many of the nation's 19,000 cities, towns and villages. The unfortunate derailment and environmental contamination in East Palestine is not unprecedented, with more than 1,000 trains derailing last year in multiple states. More than 500 cities, towns and villages signed a letter urging Congress to act on rail safety.

"Nebraskans understand the importance of the rail industry but also recognize the need for rail safety," VanMatre said during the press conference. "Derailments have increased over the last few years, including one in Gibbon in 2021. This important legislation includes funding for additional training and assistance to volunteer firefighters and other first responders."



The bipartisan Railway Safety Act passed the Senate Commerce Committee last week. The legislation must now pass the full Senate. A summary of its key provisions can be found at <https://bit.ly/45aYq4e>.

Gibbon Mayor and League of Nebraska Municipalities President, Deb VanMatre and Executive Director, Lynn Rex, went to DC for the National League of Cities State Municipal League leadership fly-in. They met with key congressional staff to discuss municipal priorities and advocate on the behalf of their residents. The group also visited the White House to meet with key staff and discuss investments in infrastructure, the debt ceiling, and other local priorities. ■

Celebrating 52 years of service!



John Grimes was recently recognized for 52 years of service to City of Kearney and the Utilities Department! According to a representative from the City of Kearney, John shared his great pride in his job and his department. During the time John has spent with the City of Kearney he has seen his department makes great strides towards modernization and improvements in operations and equipment used. Although a large amount of manual labor is still required, when John started his career in the Utilities Department much of the work was done by hand. **Left:** John and his wife Linda at John's retirement party. Fun fact: Linda and John met during John's first week working for the City of Kearney. Photos shared courtesy of the City of Kearney.

John, thank you for all you have done!

RECENT DIRECTORY UPDATES

For the 2023 Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials

The list below reflects updates to the Directory received since the Directory was released in April. Updates are listed each month in the magazine. To order a Directory, visit LONM.org/news.



Municipality	Title	Delete	Add
Bancroft	Board Member	vacant	Jon Toft
Bridgeport	City Administrator	vacant	Dawn Martin
Broken Bow	City Administrator	Daniel Knoell	David Schmidt
Hay Springs	Clerk/Treasurer	Kayley Taylor	Samantha Orr
Homer	Email	homervil@abbnebraska.com	villageofhomer@outlook.com
Morse Bluff	Clerk's Work	402-666-5264	402-607-2738
	Email	tmensik@nntc.net	morsebluffne@gmail.com
	Board Member	Tyler Vyhldal	Lynden Rathke
	Clerk/Treasurer	Kathy Mensik	Rose Shuster
Nebraska City	City Administrator	vacant	Perry Mader
	Clerk/Treasurer	Randy Dunster	
	Clerk		Randy Dunster
	Treasurer		Katie Drake-Heng
Stromsburg	Deputy Clerk/Treasurer	Kasie Leeling	Kayla Lane

Creating a vision for the *FUTURE*



The most current rendering of the Gibbon Fire Hall after the new addition is completed. Planning for the addition has been in the works for several years and work recently began.

After three years of planning, and three different city administrators, visible signs of progress have become visible to Gibbon residents on the new addition to the Gibbon Fire Hall. Site preparation began in late March on the east side of the fire hall and a public groundbreaking ceremony was held April 10 for the new addition. ■

Source – City of Gibbon



Above: A groundbreaking ceremony was held April 10 at the site of the new addition to the Gibbon Fire Hall. Manning ceremonial shovels at the ceremony were, left to right: Gibbon Fire Chief Rick Brown; Gibbon Volunteer Fire Department President Andrea Rodriguez; BD Construction representatives Rich Gregg and Scott Kralik; Wilkins ADP representatives Jacob Sertich and John Lillyman; Gibbon City Administrator Matt Smallcomb; Gibbon Mayor Deb VanMatre; Olsson Associates engineer Jess Hurlbert; and Gibbon City Councilmen Bob Krier and Derrick Clevenger. **Left:** Gibbon Mayor Deb VanMatre thanked the community at large and members of the Gibbon Volunteer Fire Department for their support in making the Gibbon Fire Hall update a reality at remarks given at the groundbreaking ceremony. Photos courtesy of Dennis Walker.

Central City welcomes Huskers to play Spring Match in new Bison Activity Dome

■ **BY RYAN DETTMAN**
CENTRAL CITY REPUBLICAN NONPAREIL ■

Editor's note: This story was originally printed in the May 4, 2023 issue of the Central City Republican Nonpareil

In January 2021, it was announced that Central City Public Schools would embark on a construction project that would bring a monolithic dome structure to Central City. It also was mentioned that there was a group interested in holding an event at the venue in 2023.

Flashforward to Saturday, April 29, as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) volleyball team made their way to Central City, the event that was once only a dream had become a reality. The Husker volleyball squad stepped off their bus to a warm welcome courtesy of the Central City High School band and community members who

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The event on Friday was a success as was the main event on Saturday. It took a village to make this event come to life beginning with a conversation between Jeff Jensen and Barry Carlson in 2020. Saturday, Jensen had a moment to soak it all in as the dome began to fill with Husker volleyball fans. Photo courtesy of the Central City Republican Nonpareil.

Taking the lead:

How city officials can promote civility

■ **BY MATT LEHRMAN**
SOCIAL PROSPERITY PARTNERS ■

Civility in local government is similar to the guardrails on a highway — providing structure by which municipal leaders and the public can navigate around each other. Securing the travel lanes provides mutual safety for people heading in all directions. When civility breaks down, however, people and perspectives collide — resulting in misunderstandings and disagreements that can harm relationships and fracture a community's sense of togetherness.

Guardrails can't provide complete protection from conflicts, but they are the fundamental structures of cooperation and coexistence.

In the first half of this article, I'm going to make the strategic, and perhaps idealistic, case for celebrating disagreement. If you've already been on the receiving end of anger and vitriol, I'll understand if you skip to the second half, which offers thoughts on how to stand strong against incivility.

Taking the lead

Every city official owns the responsibility for the infrastructure of civility in their municipality. Whatever your personal agenda or philosophy, you are — by nature of your position — undeniably responsible for ensuring access, information, and respect for all, including for those with whom you disagree.

Creating an environment that is open, fair, and considerate to everyone is crucial. This means basing your decisions on factual information, being transparent in your actions and decision-making processes, and being accountable for promoting a sense of pride and togetherness throughout your community.

By prioritizing civility, you set a positive example and build trust and confidence — not just in local government, but in your community's essential quality of togetherness. A civil local government is not just nice to have but a must-have. It is the

foundation upon which a healthy and functioning democracy is built.

Welcoming disagreements

Disagreement is not a sign of dysfunction, but rather a prerequisite for effective decision-making in a free society. The ideal of democracy is that it enables people with assorted knowledge, values and lived experiences to come together to recognize and solve community problems. The civic leadership for which you're responsible cannot be achieved without the presence of diverse and even passionate perspectives and viewpoints.

Disagreement also helps to expose underlying assumptions and biases. When individuals with different perspectives come together, they are often forced to articulate and defend their assumptions and values — a process that reveals hidden biases and assumptions. By engaging with dissenting viewpoints, municipal leaders can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem they are trying to solve. Diverse perspectives can help to identify issues that may have been overlooked or underappreciated. In this way, disagreement can be a catalyst for creativity and innovation.

When citizens are encouraged to express their views and engage in constructive dialogue, they are more



likely to hold their leaders accountable for their decisions. Can you make yourself comfortable with feedback and criticism? By engaging with — rather than avoiding or repelling — diverse perspectives, even dissent, you have the potential to create a culture of accountability that ensures decision-making is truly transparent and responsive.

As a civic leader, when you say “community,” it’s especially important for people to remember that you are responsible to serve not a specific constituency, but the entire population of your city. While it may be tempting to focus on the interests of your most vocal supporters or a community’s loudest voices, doing so can lead to short-term thinking and neglect of the long-term interests of the broader community.

Disagreement builds trust and strengthens relationships. When individuals feel that their opinions are valued and respected, they are more likely to be invested in that decision-making process. By creating forums for meaningful dialogue, municipal leaders demonstrate their commitment to the community and build relationships of trust and mutual respect. In this way, disagreement can be a powerful force for social cohesion and community building.

While disagreement can be challenging and uncomfortable, leaders must foster an environment that encourages open and honest communication. This may require the development of formal mechanisms for soliciting feedback and dissent, such as public forums or advisory committees. Leaders also must be prepared to model constructive dialogue and demonstrate a commitment to the



values of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity.

Standing strong against incivility

The American ideal of government is rooted in the belief that reasonable people can work together to find solutions to shared problems. Compromise is not a weakness, and ample time and space exist to make community decisions. While not everyone will always agree on the final outcome, the process must be fair and thorough — ensuring that everyone feels heard. This is encapsulated in the American motto, *e pluribus unum*: “Out of many, one.”

Unfortunately, this ideal is being threatened by the prevalence of anger and outrage in American media, where clicks, shares and time spent engaging translate into profit. This business model has created a market for incivility and negativity that pervades our society, leading to issues such as polarization and divisiveness. It’s a conundrum.

To counteract this, local governments

must actively practice respectful communication and behavior that promotes collaboration, compromise and constructive dialogue. Incivility, which demonstrates a lack of respect and consideration for others, creates a self-centered attitude that can leave others feeling hurt, disrespected and excluded. It can extend beyond individual interactions to affect relationships, productivity, and broader societal issues community-wide. Therefore, it’s essential to strive for an environment that encourages civility and respectful engagement, helping to restore the American ideal of government.

If you want to stand against incivility, you need to recognize and call it out when you see it, in particular:

Obstinace — stubborn adherence to one’s own opinion despite reason or persuasion.

Demagoguery — emotional and prejudicial appeals to sway public opinion, rather than engaging in rational argument.

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Civility

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Dogmatism — the inflexible adherence to a particular set of principles, beliefs or ideology, without considering alternative viewpoints or evidence.

Changing these behaviors is not something that can be achieved overnight. If you're looking for a quick fix, I'm sorry to disappoint, but there is no magic phrase or verbal jiu-jitsu tactic that can instantly reverse an instance of incivility during a council meeting.

The following is the civility that all local leaders need to get good at:

- **Energize obstinance.** Find shared goals and values that underlie the debate. By identifying common ground, you can frame the conversation in a way that encourages compromise and collaboration. Bring in outside experts, facilitators, or neutral third parties to provide fresh perspectives and objective feedback.
- **Counter demagoguery.** Focus on presenting the facts and evidence that support the proposed course of action. By presenting data and statistics in a clear and compelling way, you can help to move the conversation away from emotional appeals and toward rational and fact-based decision-making. Engaging in active listening and making space for the consideration of alternative solutions is vital.
- **Overcome dogmatism.** Frame the debate in terms of outcomes rather than ideology. By focusing on the practical implications of different policy choices, you shift the conversation away from entrenched beliefs and toward pragmatic solutions. Building alliances and coalitions across ideological lines also can be an effective way to seek out common ground and work together toward shared goals.

You have a crucial responsibility to govern your community in a fair, equitable, and just manner. This requires standing strong against incivility and disrespect, even when it's being thrown at you. By modeling respectful behavior and promoting constructive dialogue, you set the standard for your community.

Connecting, respecting and listening

As a civic leader, you are the guardian of a thriving community, responsible for making decisions that impact the lives of your residents. Facing incivility and negativity during council meetings and community events can be disheartening, but giving up is not an option when it comes to civic leadership.



Remember that your mission is to create a positive and inclusive environment for all. By prioritizing respect and collaboration, you set an example for others to follow, creating a ripple effect that can spread throughout the community. Keep your focus on how people in your community deserve to feel about civic engagement — connected, respected, and heard — and find the motivation to push through challenging situations and work toward constructive solutions.

Local leaders hold the power to shape decisions that impact people's daily lives. Making those decisions with integrity, fairness and a commitment to the greater good is crucial. By bringing people together, bridging divides and creating a better future for your community, you have a responsibility worth fighting for.

Stay strong, stay committed and keep striving toward creating a more positive and inclusive community. ■

Matt Lehrman is managing director of Social Prosperity Partners. He will deliver the opening keynote "From Conflict to Conversation" at the League of Nebraska Municipalities' Annual Conference on September 28, 2023. A version of this article originally appeared in Minnesota Cities magazine.

EPA issues best-practices memo for assessing cybersecurity risks in water and wastewater utilities

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a memo to states and public water systems (PWS) proposing best practices for evaluating water and wastewater utilities' vulnerabilities to cybersecurity attacks.

The EPA's March 2023 memo, "Addressing PWS Cybersecurity in Sanitary Surveys or an Alternate Process," offers guidance to utilities to assess current cybersecurity practices, develop risk-mitigation plans to address identified vulnerabilities and offer technical assistance for both evaluations and remedies to reduce risks.

Federal regulations require states to conduct periodic sanitary surveys of public water systems to protect drinking water. EPA interprets the regulations to include operational technology, such as industrial control systems and cybersecurity systems. As part of the state's periodic sanitary surveys of public water systems, the state will assess the cybersecurity adequacy of a PWS and if deficiencies are found, then the state must require the utility to address them.

The EPA's 100-page memo offers best practices for cybersecurity self-assessments or third-party assessments, a cybersecurity checklist, information on training and other technical assistance, and suggestions for financial assistance to assess and improve cybersecurity controls.

The EPA memo can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/waterriskassessment/epa-cybersecurity-water-sector#rule>. ■



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LIGHT deems first year serving League members a success



Dennis Maggart

“

The program has seen amazing growth from its initial membership of 22 groups with approximately 294 employees to over 52 groups with over 625 employees.

”

The League Insurance Group Health Team (LIGHT) is wrapping up a very successful year of growth and service to League members and their employees. LIGHT was formed July 1, 2022, as an Association Health Plan (AHP) and is made up exclusively of League of Nebraska Municipalities members with the express purpose of providing the highest quality employee benefit programs for municipal employees. Since we are focused specifically on the needs of League members, LIGHT was able to tailor a menu of employee benefits that not only meets the needs of your employees, but also simplifies the administration of the program. The program has seen amazing growth from its initial membership of 22 groups with approximately 294 employees to over 52 groups with over 625 employees.

This amazing growth was the result of the contributions of a dedicated LIGHT

Board, made up of member groups committed to building an efficient and stable program. Selecting the best-in-class carrier partners for our medical benefit in Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, along with Mutual of Omaha, for all of our ancillary-line coverages has proven to be a proper approach, providing high-quality service at very competitive prices. Combining those carrier products with additional administrative services has provided members with a one-stop package of coverage and services that assure the best value along with reduced administration time and cost at the municipal level. Supporting the program behind the scenes is the outstanding League staff, assisting with compliance and coordination of the programs and keeping the focus on serving the members.

LIGHT expects to continue this pattern of growth and were pleased to recently

Continued on page 19 / See LIGHT

LIGHT: Enhanced ancillary plan offerings for 2023

The League Insurance Government Health Team (LIGHT) is pleased to announce some enhanced plan offerings effective with your July 1, 2023 plan renewal. Based on feedback from our members, we have been working with Mutual of Omaha to create some additional coverage options that enhance our current menu of benefits. Each LIGHT member group can choose from a range of optional life, disability, dental, vision and worksite plans to provide their employees with the best possible package of employee benefits. In addition, by adding these coverages through the LIGHT program you have added advantage or large group pricing, more secure rating and the convenience of all your coverages being included in your EASE employee benefit administration platform.

These new offerings are optional and can be selected to replace the current group offering you have selected. The new coverages are:

- New Short-Term Disability Coverage—This is a group plan that offers employees a weekly benefit of 60% of their income up to \$1,000 after a 14-day absence.



United of Omaha Life Insurance Company
A Mutual of Omaha Company

This plan dovetails with the Mutual of Omaha Long-term Disability plans, providing your employees financial security in case of a disability.

- Enhanced Long-Term Disability Plan Option – In addition to the current plan offering, this alternative enhanced LTD plan provides higher monthly benefits. The current plan provides benefits of 60% of the covered monthly payroll up to a maximum of \$2,000 while the alternative plan

Continued on page 19 / See Plan



Adobe Stock image

Does your community need a dog park?

■ **BY DIANE BECKER**
COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING
DIRECTOR, LARM ■

Over half of U.S. residents own at least one dog and are responsible for keeping their dog(s) fed, watered, sheltered, clean, and exercised. Of these responsibilities, the most difficult one for many dog owners may be providing exercise for their

pets. Many people don't have the space in their homes or yards to allow a dog to be as active as it should be to stay healthy. Dogs also need socialization; a dog park can be a safe place to interact with other dogs. For these reasons, many municipalities have provided dog parks for pet owners.

There are pros and cons to having a dog park in a community. If a dog park has rules that are posted clearly and enforced, there are usually few problems. A well-constructed park allows plenty of space for a pre-determined number of dogs to run. It also should have solid fences and equipment that can provide play opportunities. There should also be separate areas for small and large dogs. Most dog parks also will have double-gated entrances/exits so that dogs can't escape when new dogs enter the park.

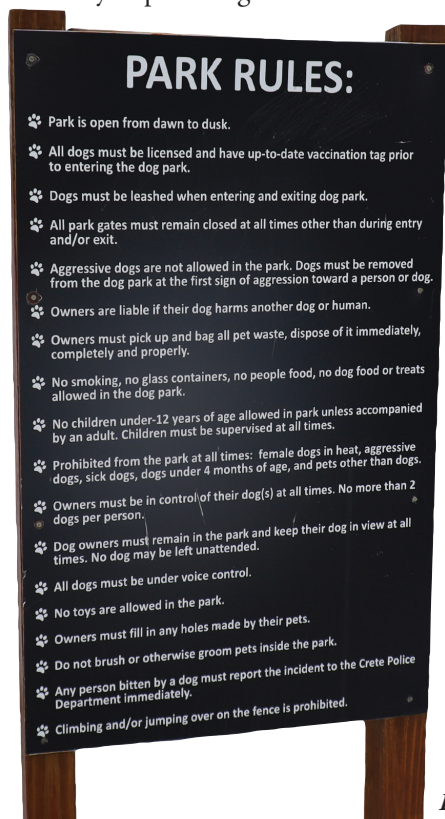
Dog parks need regular maintenance to ensure no dog feces or trash is left in the park. The grass needs to be mowed and any weeds must be controlled. Water also should be provided at the park.

If a dog park is built well and maintained and dog owners abide by the posted rules, dog parks are great amenities that cities can provide.

Some dog owners are adamantly against taking their dogs to a dog park. If a city doesn't take the time or effort to maintain it well, a dog park can be dangerous for pets. There are instances when dog parks have trash or broken equipment that injures dogs. Fences need to be repaired when needed so that dogs aren't escaping from the dog park or getting hurt by the sharp fence edging. Feces left by other dogs provide a breeding ground for diseases that can spread to other dogs.

Many dog owners complain that aggressive dogs may attack well-behaved dogs at the park. Dog owners should be in the park moving with their dogs, so the dog can run and then return to the owner if there is potential trouble with another dog in the park.

Dog parks that are run well can significantly benefit a community. Dog owners will look for available dog parks when searching for a place to live. Dog parks also provide a place for dog owners to socialize with other dog owners. A dog park can be a valuable amenity for a community if sufficient time and funds are available to build and maintain it correctly. ■



Left: Photo of the rules at Waggin' Tail Dog Park in Crete. Photo by Diane Becker/LARM



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Henry L. Wiedrich

What to make of the National Labor Relations Board—and should you care?

BY HENRY L. WIEDRICH, CLINE WILLIAMS
WRIGHT JOHNSON & OLDFATHER, L.L.P.

Historically, we have been able to separate out what parts of our government systems are political (such as legislative bodies and executive branches of government) and what parts are apolitical (judicial systems, including courts, tribunals, law enforcement, etc.).

We have come to expect just about anything from the political parts of our government, and unfortunately, sometimes we expect very little—at least when it comes to the U.S. Congress. We have grown accustomed to theater, half-truths and lies, reversals on policy, constant angling, talking points, and occasionally something productive. Regardless of political persuasion, we all kind of roll our eyes at this, but remain unsurprised. This is partly because these parts of government are intended to be representative, and therefore effect change based upon changing voting patterns, and partly because of past and current dysfunctions.

However, from our apolitical parts of government, we expect consistency and impartial justice, regardless of a person's political persuasion. We expect law enforcement agencies and officials to treat people equally and fairly, and not target political opponents. We expect courts to be fair and to apply the law in a manner that provides fair notice and consistent expectations to the parties.

These lines blur where a political part of government, and its political appointees (subject to change with elected officials), serve in a quasi-judicial capacity. This intersection is where we find the National Labor Relations Board (the “NLRB”), and its job in enforcing the National Labor Relations Act (the “NLRA”).

The Interplay between the Industrial Relations Act and the NLRA

To be clear, the NLRA does not apply to public-sector employees.¹ Instead, public employers in Nebraska are subject

to the Nebraska Industrial Relations Act (the “IRA”). The IRA prohibits certain employment practices for public employees and public employers.² For employers, such practices include, among other things: (a) refusing to negotiate in good faith with respect to mandatory topics of bargaining; (b) interfering with employees’ exercise of rights under the IRA; and (c) discriminating against an employee for membership in a union or participation in union activities.³ These prohibitions are similar to unfair labor practices listed in the NLRA.⁴

Given the similarities between the IRA and NLRA, although the NLRA does not apply to public employers, Nebraska courts have routinely stated that decisions under the NLRA, although not binding, are helpful in interpreting the IRA. Stated another way, “[d]ecisions under the NLRB are helpful where there are similar provisions under the Nebraska statutes.”⁵

This makes intuitive sense if NLRB decisions are treated like court precedent, where legal theories incrementally build over time and there is respect for precedent, such that there are not regular and dramatic changes of position by the NLRB. However, because NLRB Board members, and its general counsel, are appointed by the President for 5-year terms, with Senate confirmation, NLRB decisions are a better barometer for which party is in political power, rather than a faithful interpretation of the NLRA. This appointment process creates regular pendulum swings and reversals on NLRB decisions, which have exacerbated over time with political polarization.

What this means is that the Obama-appointed NLRB will make vastly different decisions than the Bush-appointed NLRB. Likewise, the Biden-appointed NLRB often makes decisions that are 180-degree reversals from the Trump-appointed NLRB. Generally speaking, Democrat-appointed boards are more union friendly and Republican-appointed boards are more employer friendly.

Therefore, when you see news stories about the latest ruling from the NLRB, do not be surprised if it is a reversal of a recent decision, particularly where the Executive branch has changed hands in the last four years. If you find yourself wondering what rule applies, ask what party is in control and research accordingly. A decision directly on point from the previous board may be summarily reversed the next time the issue is heard, if political power has changed hands.

For this reason, depending upon the volatility of the issue, Nebraska courts should also view NLRB decisions for what they are—reflections of political power, instead of cogent legal analysis.

The Lion Elastomers Decision by the NLRB

This brings me to the NLRB's May 1, 2023, decision⁶ in the *Lion Elastomers* case, which involved the disciplining and subsequent firing of an employee who made profane, harassing, and discriminatory comments in the course of engaging in activity that would otherwise be protected by the NLRA.

The question in the case was when does an employee's conduct become so abusive or offensive that he loses the protection of the NLRA?

The *Lion Elastomers* case is another example of pendulum swings by the NLRB. In 2020, on this very issue, the Trump-majority NLRB issued a ruling in *General Motors, LLC*, 369 NLRB 127 (2020), in which the board determined that the lawfulness of a termination or disciplinary action should be judged by whether or not the employer would have disciplined the employer for their misconduct, regardless of the context in which it occurred. This meant that if an employee would have been disciplined for engaging in abusive, aggressive, harassing, or discriminatory conduct while not exercising a right under the NLRA, then the same treatment could be applied to an employee who was exercising a right under the NLRA.

In *Lion Elastomers*, however, the Biden-majority board ruled that the evaluation of such decisions must be made based on the totality of the circumstances, including (1) the place of the discussion,

(2) the subject matter of the discussion, (3) the nature of the employee's outburst, and (4) whether the outburst was provoked by the unfair labor practice. Unsurprisingly, the more factors to be considered, the greater discretion is granted to the board in weighing those factors. In applying these factors, the board ruled that the employee's termination violated the NLRA, the employee was entitled to reinstatement, and the employee must be made whole for lost earnings. The board stated: "[F]or many decades, the Board (with judicial approval) proceeded from the experience-based premise that labor disputes are often heated and...the Board should treat some employee misconduct as inseparable for that activity...."

Employer Takeaways and Conclusions

In the event a public employer encounters an employee who is exercising rights under the IRA, and is doing it in a manner that is abusive, offensive, harassing, racist, or discriminatory, the *Lion Elastomers* decision urges caution in making a discipline or termination decision. The employer should pause and evaluate all of the facts, and consult legal counsel in making the decision. ■

Editor's Note: This article is not intended to provide legal advice to its readers. Rather, this article is intended to alert readers to new and developing issues. Readers are urged to consult their own legal counsel or the author of this article if they wish to obtain a specific legal opinion regarding their particular circumstances. The author of this article, Henry L. Wiedrich, can be contacted at Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, L.L.P., 12910 Pierce Street, Suite 200, Omaha, NE 68144, (402) 397-1700, hwiedrich@clinewilliams.com, or www.clinewilliams.com.

End notes

¹ See 29 U.S.C. § 152(2).

² Neb. Rev. Stat. § 48-424.

³ *Scottsbluff Police Officers Ass'n, Inc., F.O.P. Lodge 38 v. City of Scottsbluff*, 282 Neb. 676, 681 (2011).

⁴ 29 U.S.C. § 158.

⁵ *Nebraska Public Employees Local Union 251 v. Otoe County*, 257 Neb. 50, 63 (1999).

⁶ *Lion Elastomers LLC*, 372 NLRB No. 83 (May 1, 2023).



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Stuart awarded grant to help modernize natural gas pipelines

The Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure and Modernization Grant is part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

The Village of Stuart was recently awarded federal grant funding for a local natural gas pipeline project announced by U.S. Secretary Pete Buttigieg and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) as part of \$196 million in grants for 37 projects across 19 states.

Stuart is a member of the National Public Gas Agency (NPGA), the wholesale natural gas supply organization of NMPP Energy. The award for Stuart was presented recently at a press conference by Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen, Nebraska U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer and representatives from PHMSA and the American Public Gas Association.

The new Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization grant program provides nearly \$1 billion in funding over the course of five years to modernize municipally and community-owned natural gas distribution pipes. The award is part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Stuart was among six NPGA members that applied for grants totaling more



Village of Stuart Board Chair Larry Paxton, left, and Stuart Utility Superintendent Bob Lockman, right, are presented with a federal grant for a pipeline project by Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen. Photo courtesy of NMPP Energy.

than \$6 million in this first round of applications. The City of Trinidad, Colo., an NPGA member, also received a federal grant. The next funding opportunity of \$392 million is expected to be released in May 2023.

Stuart's grant award of \$216,662 will be used for local natural gas pipeline replacement, including pipeline valves, the implementation of an Automated Metering Infrastructure system and Global Positioning System.

Last year, NPGA held a workshop for its member communities that focused on grant funding opportunities through

PHMSA's grant program for publicly-owned utilities.

"It's great to see two of our six NPGA member utilities that applied be selected in this first round of grant funding awards," said Beth Ackland, NPGA director of gas operations. "For small utilities, applying for federal grant funding is a significant effort due to staffing limitations, so it makes it especially rewarding to see our member utilities get rewarded." ■

Source – NMPP Energy.

Seven airports to see upgrades with \$17 million in federal grant funds

Seven Nebraska airports will share \$17 million in federal grants to upgrade runways, build hangars and make other improvements.

The Federal Aviation Administration

grants come from the second funding round of the Airport Improvement Program, which promotes safety, security and environmental stewardship at the nation's airports.

Cities benefiting from the monies are Ainsworth, Burwell, Norfolk, North Platte, Scottsbluff, Sidney and Wayne, the Nebraska Department of Transportation said in a Wednesday news release.

Ann Richart of the NDOT said state officials look forward to working with

the FAA to ensure maximum use of the grant funds.

"We're happy to be able to partner with the FAA Central Region in Kansas City to get this essential grant funding to our airports," said Richart, director of the aeronautics division.

Grant recipients:

- \$12 million is to rehabilitate the runway at Scottsbluff's Western Nebraska Regional/William B. Heilig Field.

Continued on page 26 / Airports

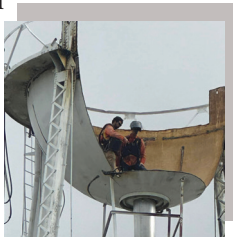
A change in the view

Photos by:
Donna Garrison
and
Moria Holly



Things are changing in the Village of DeWitt. In late April, the old water tower was taken down. The structure, erected in 1912 by Des Moines Bridge & Iron Co. was disconnected from the Village's water system about 10 years ago. The Village of DeWitt had a larger tower installed to meet the growing needs of the village in 1977.

According to Moria Holly, Village Clerk and Treasurer for DeWitt, it was not an easy decision to take down the old water tower. The tower has a



place in DeWitt's long history and became a familiar part of the skyline. To ensure the safety of the people and property around the old water tower, it was determined that taking the structure down was best. Most of the equipment was dropped off the day before.

The demolition crew showed up a little before 5 a.m. to start setting up, they started cutting around 6 a.m. and it was nearly all down by 1 p.m. Holly said it was really neat to watch and she was impressed with how efficiently the team worked together to take the structure down so quickly. ■

LIGHT

Continued from page 13

announce the first annual medical renewal adjustment on July 1, 2023, of 4.4%, which is well below industry trend of 7-9% for 2023. The Board also is considering other enhancements to the product offerings that should

allow LIGHT to meet the needs of even more League members. League member municipalities can apply to join LIGHT at any time throughout the year by contacting the League office, Dennis Maggart or their local broker. As the LIGHT program continues to grow,

we believe it will prove to stabilize rates for its members and enhance service for both member municipalities and your employees. ■

This article is written by Dennis Maggart, Executive Vice-President of McInnes Group, Inc.

Plan

Continued from page 13

increases that maximum to \$4,000 per month. This offers additional financial security to groups with higher-paid employees at a very reasonable premium.

- Enhanced Dental Plan Option – In addition to the current dental plan, an alternative plan is available to groups that provide up to \$2,000 in annual benefits!

A summary of the coverages and complete plan summaries are available upon request.

These new plan options are available in addition to the current disability, dental, vision plans and worksite plans. Now is

the time for you to consider enhancing your current Long-Term Disability and dental coverages or adding any of these coverages that you do not currently offer to your employees. Disability coverages must be offered on an employer-paid basis, covering all full-time employees. Dental and Vision plan offerings are selected by the group, but can be offered on a contributory basis (employer pays some or all of the premium) or on a voluntary basis (employee paid). If you would like to make changes to any of your plan offerings, just let us know and we can answer any questions and get you the necessary paperwork to document the change.

As a reminder, this is also the open enrollment time for your worksite products with Mutual of Omaha. Employees will be receiving a reminder of the opportunity to enroll in the Voluntary Accident and Voluntary Critical Illness plans on 7/1/23. All of the necessary information on the eligible plans will be included on your EASE platform, but if you would like more information on any of the plans, please contact your broker or just let us know. ■

Dennis Maggart can be reached at dennis@mcinnesgroup.com or by calling 913-378-9841 or 816-718-0335. Jane Limbach can be reached at jane@mcinnesgroup.com or by calling 913-378-9840

Obama Foundation holds up Omaha gun violence prevention program as model

■ BY HENRY J. CORDES
OMAHA WORLD HERALD ■

Omaha is once again receiving attention for its efforts to reduce gun violence — this time in the form of a sizable grant from the charitable foundation of former President Barack Obama.

The Obama Foundation is recognizing Omaha for the creation of a model program targeting gun violence. As part of that, the foundation is awarding \$800,000 to the Empowerment Network, a community organization active in efforts to reduce gun violence and improve life in North Omaha.

The Empowerment Network in 2008 launched Omaha 360, a collaboration in which community stakeholders work with the Omaha Police Department to head off gun violence. Both shootings and homicides in recent years are down sharply from levels seen a decade ago.

The grant is coming through the Obama Foundation's My Brother's Keeper Alliance, which works to create opportunity for boys and young men of color.

Adren Wilson, the executive director of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, said



President Obama joins the My Brother's Alliance Impact in Action convening in Chicago on May 10, 2023. Photo courtesy of the The Obama Foundation

the group “is confident that Omaha will continue to serve as a beacon of hope and best practices for other communities to follow.”



Omaha Police Chief
Todd Schmaderer

Willie Barney, founder and president of the Empowerment Network, said the grant funds over the next two years will help it work with other community partners in an effort to further reduce violence. The idea will be to “go upstream” with new initiatives aimed at helping youths succeed in school and connecting them with jobs.

“It’s a huge opportunity for Omaha,” Barney said.

Many cities across the country have recently been searching for answers on gun violence after the pandemic resulted in a big spike in shootings. That has recently helped focus more attention on Omaha’s efforts.

Beginning in 2007, Omaha began seeing escalating homicides and shootings, with much of the violence centered on gang activity in North and South Omaha.

In 2015, the 50 homicides in Omaha represented the city’s highest toll since 1967. The situation was so dire and deadly that in 2011, Nebraska ranked No. 1 in the nation for Black homicide victimization rate.

In late 2008, the Empowerment Network organized the first meeting of what has become the Omaha 360 Violence Intervention and Prevention Collaborative.

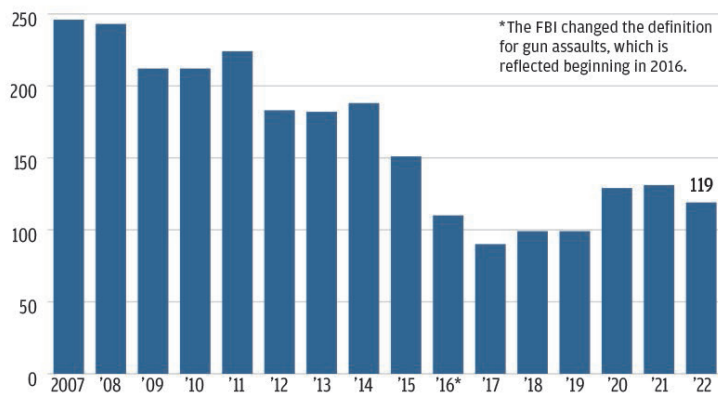
At each weekly Omaha 360 meeting, representatives of community, youth, faith, neighborhood, education, social service, gang intervention, and mentoring organizations sit down with Omaha police leaders and work on defusing violence. The weekly sessions regularly draw 80 to 100 participants, and can exceed 120 after a particularly rough rash of shootings.

Though Omaha 360 has many elements, prevention is at its center: Sharing

Stemming the tide of Omaha gun assaults, homicides

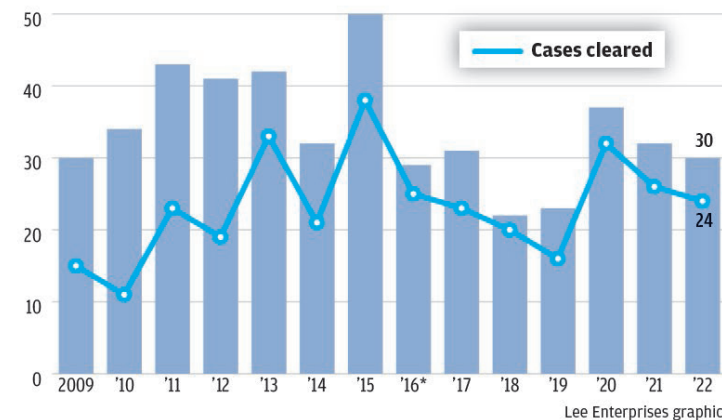
Omaha gun assault victims

While gun assaults in Omaha have trended up since the pandemic, the recent figures are well below what was seen the previous decade.



Omaha homicides

Omaha homicides are also down significantly, and they are solved at a higher rate, too.



information with police to learn of neighborhood gang hot spots. Canvassing those neighborhoods to ask about problem houses and make sure that people know about available Crime Stoppers rewards. Seeking to connect families with community aid organizations in an effort to keep at-risk kids out of gangs.

Omaha police officials also have worked hand in hand with Omaha 360 and employed all-new tactics, including a beefed-up gang specialty unit, shot detection technology that speeds response to shootings, enhanced rewards for tips that solve shootings and street-level gang intervention.

Looking at FBI crime statistics, the results are notable.

Shootings in Omaha began trending down significantly in 2012. Homicides have dropped dramatically since 2015, reaching lows in 2018 and 2019 that were half the previous levels.

Where Nebraska previously ranked at the very top in Black homicide victimization rate, the state was 23rd in 2019 and 16th in 2020. Such figures show improvement as well as the fact that the state has a way to go.

Omaha experienced the same uptick in homicides and shootings seen nationally during the pandemic. But they ticked down in 2021 and 2022 and remain well below the levels seen a decade ago.

A year ago, a City Council member and others in Kansas City concerned about gun violence in that city visited an Omaha 360 meeting. That led months later to the launch of KC 360, the

first program nationally modeled on Omaha's gun violence initiative.

Then when ABC News in February did a story on Omaha 360 in Omaha, Barney heard from cities around the country. He and Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer subsequently

held a Zoom session with representatives of 32 cities discussing the strategy in Omaha, among them San Diego, Houston, Detroit, Chicago and Atlanta.

CNN also recently interviewed Schmaderer and Barney for a segment focused

on the Omaha initiative.

Now comes the grant award from the Obama Foundation.

"I think it's really a strong confirmation of the work that has been going on in Omaha for 15 or 16 years and a reflection of the partnership and collaboration," Barney said. "We know we have plenty of work ahead, but there are some really positive things that have developed through that collaboration."

The former president is announcing Omaha as one of four cities recognized for model programs supporting success for youths. The others are Tulsa, Newark and Yonkers, New York.

Barney doesn't think it's the last time he'll share information on Omaha's efforts to stamp out gun violence.

"I think this will accelerate things even more," he said. ■

Reprinted by permission.

"Where Nebraska previously ranked at the very top in Black homicide victimization rate, the state was 23rd in 2019 and 16th in 2020. Such figures show improvement as well as the fact that the state has a way to go."

By Mayor Justin M. Bibb, Cleveland, OH; Mayor Brandon Scott, Baltimore, MD; Mayor Ben Walsh, Syracuse, NY; Mayor Sharon Weston Broome, Baton Rouge, LA; Mayor Victoria Woodards, Tacoma, WA, NLC 1st Vice President • www.nlc.com

As city leaders, we know local workers are essential to the economic vitality and competitiveness of our communities and our nation. That's why each of our cities chose to allocate portions of our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds towards ensuring we have a trained and prepared workforce to meet the growing demand of employers.

Our investments also are necessary to meet the needs of workers, ensuring they have the support they need in order to get to work and stay in work.

As we strive to address the workforce needs in our communities, we know so much of this work is possible because of our partnership with the federal government. From the unprecedented investment in cities through ARPA to the workforce focus embedded in priorities across the Administration, we know our federal partners understand the need in local communities and that it must not go unaddressed.

In a briefing to congressional offices last month, we collectively uplifted the ways in which cities are leading in local workforce investments and where the federal government can continue to step in and step up through partnership:

Connecting Residents to Good Jobs

You cannot talk about access to jobs without recognizing and referencing sustainable wages. In our communities, we are working with employers to invest in their workers through not only wages, but also through apprenticeships and earn and learn models that allow employees to advance within a business. This effort takes intention and a commitment to have a long term, steady focus on these issues. We also are working to model these types of values and principles as employers. As cities struggle to retain a municipal workforce, our residents continue to desire first class response to their concerns. In order to have that first-class, top-notch service, we must have the competitiveness to hire and retain staff who are equipped and trained to do this important work. This includes having competitive wages and benefits for our municipal employees.

Using Fund Flexibility to Address Community Needs

The flexibility given to all cities, towns and villages across the country through ARPA was unprecedented and unmatched by any other type of federal funding cities have utilized before. This flexibility to design programs and to be innovative in our approaches to our local challenges will be the key to our success. We have been able to go beyond the investment in worker training and address other barriers to employment, including childcare, safe quality affordable housing and transportation, all of which are a critical piece of the equation as we address the needs of workers.

Engaging Partners

If there's anything we have learned leading our respective cities, it is that we at city hall cannot do it alone. We have partnered with local businesses, community colleges and postsecondary institutions. We are working in our K-12 school systems, with those who are leaving the criminal justice system and with our nation's opportunity youth. We also are partnering with our local Workforce Investment Boards, chambers, other community stakeholder groups and entrepreneurship programs to support those who wish to start their own businesses.

Investing in Equitable Workforce Development

An inclusive workforce takes intentionality, proactivity and sustainable commitment. As we gear up to rebuild our nation's roads and bridges, we know that 81% of transportation workers are male and 68% are white. We are working to ensure that women, BIPOC communities, LGBTQ+ communities, veterans and other underrepresented communities are included in our local

Continued on page 23 / See Workforce

Workforce

Continued from page 22

workforce engagement programs and initiatives to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of our residents.

Focusing on Youth

Creating opportunities for our young people is critically important – and that means investing not only in summer jobs but in year-round jobs and resources. We also must work to connect these young people to meaningful work experiences that expose them to new careers, offer job security and match their passions with opportunity.

The sustainability of this ongoing work is important. While we can all strive to allocate more of our local funds towards these initiatives, we look forward to continuing to partner with the federal government to ensure flexible funding streams that allow each of us to meet the needs of our residents and businesses where they are. Now is the time for our country to double-down on our investments in our workers to ensure that we are prepared not only for tomorrow, but for the future. ■

Source – National League of Cities



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Huskers

Continued from page 7

gathered to share in the moment. The red-carpet treatment continued leaving a lasting impact on Coach John Cook and his team.

“This felt like a final four in a way,” says Coach Cook. “With the gifts, everything we went to, the hotel how it was all set up, that is what it feels like when you go to a final four. Everybody is just fired up that you are there, giving you gifts and giving you the red-carpet treatment – Just playing in this facility – This is a really really nice facility. They have better locker rooms here than some of the Big Ten schools. The court was great, the venue was great. I think everyone had a great seat tonight then you add in TV and radio. Just look at this, where else is this happening for a spring match?”

The game itself was a success for the Cornhusker volleyball team as they were able to sweep the Wichita State Shockers in three sets, but the larger accomplishment may have been the weekend itself. On Friday night, local youth players were able to step on to the court as part of a coach’s clinic just prior to the team’s arrival. From there, sponsors and those involved in the clinic were able to watch the team practice prior to a meal.

Saturday the match got kicked off with all eyes on Central City. Nebraska Public Media and Big Ten Plus both ran a broadcast of the game with Husker Sports Networks also providing a radio call. Doves of media and Husker fans emerged on Central City with much excitement. Following the match, the players took plenty of time signing autographs and making the day of many little Husker fans.

It was a day that began as a dream of Superintendent Jeff Jensen and over the weekend he and others were able to watch that dream play out before their eyes. It took a full team and countless numbers



It was a weekend to remember in Central City and it all began with a large welcome for the Husker volleyball team as the Bison band played them off the bus and inside the Bison Activity Dome where balloons and decorations waited. Photo courtesy of the Central City Republican Nonpareil.

of school personnel and volunteers to make sure that the event was a success.

“What an historic community opportunity to have Husker Volleyball in Central City, Nebraska,” says Central City Superintendent Jeff Jensen. “The initial response is that everyone had an exceptional experience from fans to players and that was the intent. We wanted to put on a first-class production that showcased our community and showcased our hospitality. I think we accomplished that and I really want to credit all those who were involved for their organization, efforts and courtesy

to our guests. There is already talk about what is next. Our community should be proud of what took place this past weekend.”

Coming out of a global pandemic school officials chose to dream big. In that time the Bison Activity Dome has not only been built, but has also hosted multiple capacity limit events. The economic impact of the dome is yet to fully be seen, but as events continue to fill the dome, more and more eyes make their way to Central City. ■

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For Sale

Electrical Meters. The City of Friend has Senus Series B electrical meters for sale. \$5 each. Contact cityoffriend@windstream.net or call 402-947-2711 if interested.

Positions

Executive Director, Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. The Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission has an opening for the Executive Director position. The Director is responsible for administration of the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act. Candidates must have a bachelor's degree, successful managerial and supervisory experience, and ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing. Familiarity with and ability to analyze and evaluate legal issues is desirable. June 30, 2023 is the deadline for applications. A full description of the position, including required and desirable qualifications, and application procedures and requirements may be found at: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/nebraska/jobs/3990455/executive-director>

Golf Course Maintenance Superintendent, Papillion

Base pay: \$60,026.00 - \$78,858.00 / Year
Reports to: Golf Course General Manager
Supervises: Golf Maintenance Seasonal Workers

Purpose of position: Responsible for supervising and coordinating various maintenance and operational activities in the upkeep and maintenance of the city's golf course grounds.

Essential function: Supervises golf course maintenance employees through various activities including but not limited to staffing, scheduling work, assigning work duties, monitoring job performance, and recommending disciplinary actions.

- Trains and monitors employees in the safe and efficient operation of various equipment, skills, and techniques.

- Prepares the departmental budget.

- Works closely with and coordinates with the Clubhouse staff on any issues related to golf course maintenance pertaining to maintenance scheduling.

- Supervises and participates in the upkeep and maintenance of the city's golf course grounds through various activities including but not limited to mowing, landscaping, trimming of trees, bushes and shrubs, etc.; confers with the General Manager on matters relating to the care and maintenance of the grounds and the course.

- Oversees the maintenance and operation of the course(s) irrigation system; makes necessary repairs as needed.

- Participates in the application and storage of the chemicals and equipment used for weed and/or insect control, fertilization, etc.; supervises and directs employees in the control of disease, weeds, pests, etc. to ensure proper and safe use.

- Supervises and participates in the propagation of turf grass.

- Participates in the construction and development of the golf course grounds.

- Supervises and participates in preventative maintenance and repair of turf grass equipment, such as mowers, weed eaters, fertilizers, sprayers, etc.; informs the General Manager of equipment needing major repairs.

Please visit www.papillion.org, click on 'Apply for Job' to find the entire job posting.

Electrical Lineman, St. Paul. The City of St. Paul, Nebraska, is accepting applications for an electric distribution lineman. This is a full-time Union paid position which requires knowledge and training of the municipal electric system. Work duties include but not limited to testing, repair, building and maintenance of the overhead and underground municipal electric system. Lifting, construction, general labor and to be able to operate heavy equipment and the upkeep of the electric system are expected. Must obtain a Nebraska Class B CDL with an air brake endorsement driver's license and be insurable under the City of St. Paul's automobile policy. Wage is based on

experience and knowledge (\$20.56-30.79). Application can be obtained at the City Office, 704 6th Street, St. Paul, NE 68873 or at www.stpaulnebraska.com

Water/Wastewater Operator & Maintenance Work, Wolbach. The Village of Wolbach is seeking a qualified individual to serve as a full time Water/Wastewater Operator & Maintenance Worker. This position will perform duties in the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the sewer and water systems; streets; storm drainage; parks, swimming pool; city equipment operations; and other tasks assigned for the Village of Wolbach. Candidates must be in good physical condition and possess a valid Nebraska driver's license and a clean driving record. State Certification as a Grade 4 Water Operators and a Grade 2 Wastewater Operators License are required or the ability to obtain proper licensure within 1 year of employment) Pay based on experience and certification. Resumes will be reviewed as received, and it will be preferred to receive them as soon as possible. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Please contact the Village of Wolbach at 308-246-5278 for an application and complete job description or you can send your resume to PO Box 97, Wolbach, NE 68882. Village of Wolbach is an EOE.

City Manager, Denison, IA. Denison, Iowa, population 8,373 is seeking a skilled communicator and team builder to serve as the next City Manager. Denison is a prosperous community located in north west Iowa, just 75 miles from Sioux City, and close to big cities like Omaha, NE and Des Moines, IA. There is a total of 49 full time employees. The annual operating budget is approximately \$19 Million. To learn more about Denison, the position profile and job description, visit their website at <https://denisonia.com/>.

The successful candidate will have knowledge with economic development and tax increment financing, long and short-

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Positions

Continued from page 25

term financial planning experience, grant writing, and be an active and approachable ambassador for the community.

Education - A Bachelor's Degree majoring in public administration, business management, law, political science, accounting, finance, economics, or related field. An equivalent combination of seven (7) years related education/experience may be considered

Experience - Five (5) years of progressively responsible municipal administrative experience or similar experience sufficient

to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed in the job description

Salary and benefits - \$110,000 to \$130,000 annually, depending upon qualifications; Holidays, Vacation, and Personal Sick Leave; Health, Vision, Dental, Short-term Disability and Life Insurance are available; IPERS retirement benefits are available; Car Allowance; A vehicle is provided or mileage reimbursement; Valid Iowa Driver's License & provide proof of insurance; Residency Requirement; Residency within the city

limits is required within one (1) year of employment, unless an extension is necessary and agreed upon by both parties

Additional Information- Confidential materials such as a application, cover letter, resume, and a minimum of five (5) professional references should be sent to:

Jodie Flaherty, Denison City Clerk

CityClerk@denisonia.com

712 263-3143

Applications are due no later than noon CST on June 1, 2023. ■

Airport

Continued from page 18


- \$2.9 million will help reconstruct the taxiway at North Platte Regional/Lee Bird Field.
- \$600,000 will install runway improvements at Norfolk Regional/Karl Stefan Memorial Field.

Grants also will go to four airports for new hangars:

- \$553,980 goes to Ainsworth Regional.
- \$235,540 to Burwell Cram Field; \$451,562 to Sidney Municipal/Lloyd W. Carr Field.
- \$450,000 to Wayne Municipal/Stam Morris Field. ■

Source – *The Nebraska Examiner*. Read more from the Examiner at <https://nebraskaexaminer.com/>

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