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CONTACT: Ed Cochran, executive director, North Omaha Development Project, (402) 233-7152
Karla Ewert, vice president-communications, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, (402) 978-7942

North Omaha Development Project Outlines 2009 Goals Development of the North Omaha Business Park II Among Key Objectives

OMAHA, Neb., Jan. 29, 2009 - The North Omaha Development Project (NODP), an initiative of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, is outlining its goals for the new year, encouraged by a string of significant successes in 2008.

Topping the list of 2009 objectives is the development of North Omaha Business Park II, a complement to the North Omaha Business Park I at 24th and Paul streets.

"We've already begun looking for locations and tenants for North Omaha Business Park II. We are in the process of the administrative 'start up' activities that have to occur to accomplish this important project," said NODP executive director Ed Cochran.

Cochran discussed the new business park plan and other aims for 2009 with members of the NODP executive and steering committees as well as community members at the annual North Omaha Development Project Community Meeting at Omaha North High Magnet School.

"We are pursuing a number of funding opportunities that will result in several million dollars worth of investment in the North Omaha study area," said Cochran. "Even with the current economic challenge, we are optimistic."

He added, "We are very close on deals with two well-known retail organizations to make a substantial investment in the 30th and Ames corridor. This, coupled with the scheduled 2nd quarter groundbreaking of an ALDI store — a leader in the grocery industry, gives us positive momentum in the area."

Several major infrastructure projects will also impact North Omaha in the near future.

"The combined sewer overflow project and, of course, the new downtown baseball stadium are opportunities we'd like to take advantage of."

NODP's ambitious blueprint for 2009 follows a momentous 2008.

"One accomplishment of which I am most proud is the imminent filling of Omaha Business Park I," said Cochran. "We are just one-tenant away. Stay tuned for that announcement in the very near future." Current tenants include Armored Knights, Cintas, First National Bank, Wes & Willy and New Community Development Corp.

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Also in 2008, North Omaha and the NODP welcomed the B Street Collision Center and Big

Mama's Kitchen and Catering. Metropolitan Community College broke ground on its \$16 million Institute for the Culinary Arts, and Interstate Printing, a fixture in North Omaha since 1956, updated its facility with a state-of-the-art, \$3 million printer.

"We are extremely pleased that Metropolitan Community College and Interstate Printing continued their long-honored traditions of making significant investments in the North Omaha community," said Cochran.

Cochran also acknowledged the upcoming graduation for the first class of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska/Mutual of Omaha Customer Service Program announced last July. The program, designed to alleviate workforce shortages by identifying, training and preparing workers for entry into the job marketplace, represents a partnership among NODP, the companies, Goodwill Industries and Metropolitan Community College.

Cochran was quick to spread the credit for recent successes, stressing the North Omaha Development Project represents a commitment on behalf of a multitude of partners.

"Without the concerted effort of all these organizations investing in the community while at the same time pulling in the same direction, we would not be successful."

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The North Omaha Development Project is a commitment of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, African American business leaders, the North Omaha community, corporate leaders and elected officials to develop a strategy that would result in significant business investments in North Omaha. The North Omaha Development Project plan is the culmination of a yearlong study process that capitalized on the area's greatest assets – the people of the community and the rich heritage.

This plan builds upon the economic rebirth already taking place throughout North Omaha. Located just north of Omaha's downtown, the North Omaha study area is bordered by Sorensen Parkway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, 16th Street on the east and 52nd Street on the west.

North Omaha Development Project
1301 Harney St. Omaha, NE 68102-1804
Phone (402) 233-7152 Fax (402) 346-7050