

North Omaha Development Project

June 2010

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The North Omaha Development Project is a commitment of the Greater Omaha Chamber, African American business leaders, corporate leaders, elected officials and the North Omaha community to make important investments in North Omaha.



Ed Cochran
Executive Director

Welcome to the June issue of the North Omaha Development Project (NODP) newsletter!

Please join me in welcoming our newest NODP board member-- Curt Simon. Curt is the executive director of the Metro Area Transit (MAT) authority and is chair of our transportation committee.

Curt replaced Cathy Wyatt who has moved

into a new position that unfortunately made it impossible to continue in that role. We thank Cathy for her dedication, hard work and service and wish her the best of luck with her new opportunity. We also look forward to a strong collaboration with MAT as transportation is a key component to accessing employment.

There are several positive events taking place in North Omaha. Please consider attending some of the many events mentioned in the articles that follow. These events include the high ropes course opening the week of June 21, the Eastern Omaha Business Collaborative (EOBC) business fair on

June 25 and 26, the ribbon cutting of the 50th Street and Ames Avenue First National Bank facility on June 28, and the ribbon cutting of the SAC Federal Credit Union facility on 31st Street and Ames Avenue scheduled for July 7. These events continue to speak to the positive economic momentum taking place in North Omaha.



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New Banking Neighbors to Open Their Doors

Please welcome a new state of the art First National Bank location at 50th Street and Ames Avenue. The ribbon cutting is set to take place June 28, at 8:45 a.m.

On July 7, at 10 a.m. there will be a new SAC Federal Credit Union ribbon cutting

ceremony at 31st Street and Ames Avenue. SAC's current facility located at 50th Street and Ames Avenue will continue to receive business.

Also scheduled to open this fall at 48th Street and Ames Avenue is Centris Federal Credit Union.

Consider visiting one of

these neighborhood bank locations and take advantage of great offers like free checking for personal accounts as well as new business account options.

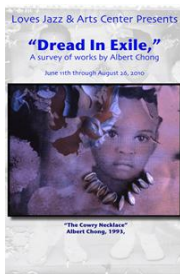


Business Training Offered by Metropolitan Community College

If your company or organization needs help moving to the next level, consider the Business & Training Services that Metropolitan Community College (MCC) has to offer. These services include customized workshops, online credit courses for convenience, an employee-to-college program and credit degree programs. Training can take place at one of MCC's community locations or at the place of business. Visit www.mccneb.edu/bts for more information.

Support the Arts in North Omaha

From June 11 - Aug. 26, an art exhibit called 'Dread in Exile' by artist Albert Chong will be on display at the Love's Jazz and Arts Center, 2510 N. 24th St. Born in Jamaica and of African and Chinese descent, Chong tells a personal story through his artwork. The Center is a cornerstone for artists to display their work. For more information visit www.lovesjazzartcenter.org



NorthStar Foundation High Ropes Course

The NorthStar Foundation, dedicated to providing before and after-school programming in North Omaha, has partnered with Outward Bound, the nation's leading provider of learning expeditions that inspire character development and leadership service. The Outward Bound Center will be located in North

Omaha on land leased by the NorthStar Foundation.

The week of June 21, the NorthStar Foundation plans to open a high ropes course on the campus of the Omaha Home for Boys, located at 52nd Street and Ames Avenue, to be used exclusively by Outward Bound. The NorthStar Foundation was established in 2007 and

the Outward Bound program has been around since 1941.



For more information visit: www.northstar360.org www.outwardbound.org

North Omaha Action Planning Session a Success

On May 27, at North High Magnet School, about 75 North Omaha stakeholders were able to give their feedback, suggestions, ideas and comments about the community development designs through an interactive process with architecture consultants, H3 Studio and Schemmer. The North Omaha Action plan's main corridors of concentration include

North 24th Street along Lake Street, Adams Park, 30th and Parker streets and the Malcolm X birth site. More community and stakeholder input was gathered to get feedback on updated designs from the previous action planning sessions. Input was provided by a diverse group including local residents, entrepreneurs, various neighborhood association

representatives and other nonprofit organizations.

To find out when the next action planning session is going to take place, subscribe to the Empowerment Network's e-mail list at www.empoweromaha.com or contact Vicki Quaites-Ferris at (402) 502-5153.

North O Business Focus: Big Mama's Kitchen

Congratulations to Big Mama's Kitchen & Catering for being named the Minority Business of the Year at the Chamber's Omaha 25 Awards luncheon in May! Businesses and nonprofits are nominated to receive an Omaha 25 Award for contributing to

the positive growth of the Greater Omaha business community.

Big Mama's is a strong contributor to North Omaha's business community and has continued to grow since its inception over two years ago.

Patricia Barron, owner of Big Mama's, catered food for 30 years out of her own kitchen before starting the restaurant — a dream of hers since she was 6 years old.

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Customer Service Training Offered for Financial Services/Insurance Industry

Goodwill Industries has secured a three-year training program in Customer Service for the financial services and insurance industries. Applicants must possess a high school diploma or GED and are required to have a background check and drug screening. The Compass Test used by Metropolitan Community College will be used to determine skill level and abilities.

The training lasts 15-20 weeks and takes place at Metropolitan Community College's Fort Omaha campus. Several companies looking to hire customer service representatives after the training

include Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, Mutual of Omaha, Aflac and First National Bank.

These positions have the potential for someone to earn \$10-\$14 per hour.

Over a three year period, until March 2013, the Goodwill Industries expects to train 200 people in this program. This training is made possible through a \$2 million grant from the Department of Labor through the Recovery Act. In addition to the proposed training, four full-time and one part-time staff positions

are expected to be filled to deliver the training, coach the trainees and provide follow-up services.

In addition, our local Goodwill Industries office was the only one in the country to receive this grant opportunity. At the end of the training, participants will receive a specialist diploma in customer service as well as college credit for going through the training.

For more information, contact Danny McPherson with Goodwill Industries at (402) 231-1903 or go to www.goodwillomaha.org.

Malcolm X Memorial Celebrations

On May 22, the Malcolm X Foundation, located at 3448 Pinkney St., held an African themed birthday celebration in honor of Malcolm X. The gathering comprised of marketplace, craft vendors, African games, drumming, dance, storytelling, sing-alongs, African apparel, a flag display, African arts and craft-making, music, educational workshops and food. Sharif Liwaru, president of the Malcolm X Foundation says, "The African drumming attracted a lot of attention, but the most important thing gained from this event was for the community to share ideas about what is going on." To stay tuned for other upcoming events at the site visit www.malcolmxfoundation.org.

Juneteenth Celebrations

Juneteenth is a time of "celebration as well as reflection" for African-Americans according to Carlos Carr, coordinator of this year's Juneteenth events. Carlos says, "Juneteenth is just as important as the 4th of July for African Americans. It is a time to celebrate our independence." On Friday, June 18, from 8 - 10:30 a.m. there will be a "free" pancake feed with choice of breakfast sides and milk at Gethsemane Baptist Church located at 4102 Florence Blvd. Juneteenth books and T-shirts will be available for purchase. On Saturday, June 19, from 10 a.m. to noon there will be a Juneteenth parade starting at 30th and Lake streets extending all the way to 30th and Sprague streets. Also, from 1 - 5 p.m. there will be a car show as well as other events hosted at the Malcolm X birth site at 36th and Evans streets with free food sponsored by ConAgra Foods.

Business Expo

The Eastern Omaha Business Collaborative (EOBC) spearheaded by the United Way of the Midlands and other partners, will host a business fair located at the TAC building located at 3215 Cuming St. on June 25, from noon - 4 p.m. and June 26, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. This event is free to the public. Those who register for both days will receive a binder on how to start a business. For organizations wanting to reserve a table the cost is \$100.

The EOBC aims to encourage business ownership of North and South Omaha residents. A pilot program has been initiated to target specific needs of small business owners. The business needs addressed include credit concerns and access to capital. Through this collaborative the EOBC hopes to bring to the forefront the services that exist within the North and South Omaha communities to start a new business or even grow an existing business. The EOBC plans to offer a new and more holistic approach to ensuring the sustainability of small businesses.

Please contact Yolanda Bowman with the United Way at (402) 522-7966 with any questions.

Join Activate Omaha in Adams Park on June 26

On June 26, at 10 a.m., Activate Omaha will be celebrating the grand opening of the new biking and hiking trail at Adam's Park. This "gateway trail" will introduce everyone to new kinds of outdoor recreation including mountain biking, trail running and hiking. Activate Omaha is working in conjunction with another local organization called THOR (Trails Have Our Respect) along with IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) to build bike trails in Adams Park. The effort is geared towards getting kids to take on fun and healthy activities such as bike riding. These efforts will create more awareness

of physical activities taking place at the Adams Park Community Center. Phase I- called the "easy trail loop node" is nearly complete and phase II-called the "pump track," is planned for next spring. IMBA is breaking new ground by implementing a single track trail in an urban park, something that has been done predominantly in mountainous areas in the past.

Bringing this experience to Adams Park as a pilot project will be an exciting endeavor for community partners such as YMCA, Girls, Inc., Campfire USA and other youth groups.

Both the easy trail loop node and the pump track are geared toward beginner riders. Both will be built by volunteers. The Adams Park Gateway Trail building has been done in whole by volunteers. Funding from the National Parks Service will provide signage for the trails. Partners of the effort include the National Parks Service, the YMCA, the City of Omaha Parks and Recreation Department and NODP.

Call "Activate Omaha" at (402) 934-5923 or visit

www.activateomaha.org.

Big Mama's continued...

Big Mama's continues to put Omaha on the business map by appearing on shows like the Food Network and the Travel Channel's "101 Tastiest Places to Chowdown" where this past January Big Mama's was the only restaurant from Nebraska and Iowa to reach the #56 ranking.

Barron continues to attract people from all over the world including people from Australia and Canada who are just passing through Omaha and make it a point to

stop at her restaurant and taste her specialty soul food cuisine. Big Mama's is known for its oven fried chicken, catfish fried in peanut oil, gigantic fried shrimp, and spicy Afro burgers. Big Mama's true talent is demonstrated in the variety of desserts she creates just from sweet potatoes including pie, cheesecake, and ice cream.

Big Mama's is proud to be a North Omaha business that helps to increase commerce and create jobs.

Big Mama's is located at 45th Street and Bedford Avenue — in the former site of the Nebraska School for the Deaf, now called Turning Point Campus.



Photo courtesy of Midlands Business Journal, May 7, 2010 edition.