

## North Omaha Development Project

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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.



### Executive Director Letter



Ed Cochran  
Executive Director

Invest. Empower.  
Succeed.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the North Omaha Development Project newsletter! I am pleased to announce this publication will appear quarterly to help publicize the dynamic, positive change happening in North Omaha, encouraged by the North Omaha Development Project (NODP). NODP is a catalyst organization

born of the Greater Omaha Chamber, elected officials, African-American leaders and the North Omaha community. We take action and make significant, initial investments to spur private development through our partners. The articles in this newsletter are a tribute to progress.

We are succeeding by building on the tradition and years of hard work of the many before us, standing on their shoulders in order to move ahead. To learn more about our recent successes and what's ahead for 2010, please join us for our community meeting: Jan. 28, 2010, 6 p.m. at the Institute of Culinary Arts on Metropolitan Community

College's Fort Omaha campus. For now, enjoy the articles and information in this premiere NODP newsletter. Thank you for your efforts and your support!

If you have any questions, concerns or otherwise need to get in touch, see our contact information on the left side of the page.



Dreamland Plaza

### Health Center Investing in Additional Campus Upgrades

An institution dedicated to wellness is, itself, thriving. North Omaha's Charles Drew Health Center is undergoing another phase of expansion and renovation, a \$900,000,

federally funded project. Upgrades to the campus include an extended parking lot, the addition of a block of green space and the transformation of an existing building into a health & fitness center for

patients and employees. The new improvements, expected to be complete in late December/early January, follow a major growth spurt in 2007.

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## Charles Drew Health Center, cont.



Charles Drew Health Center

Utilizing funds from a \$4 million capital campaign, the center more than doubled in size -- from 13,000 square feet to 27,000 square feet -- and added nine exam rooms. Richard Brown, CEO of the Charles Drew Health Center, said the center's continued investment in its campus and its community sends a message. "I think the

message to the broader community is that it is ok to invest in North Omaha. There are services that are needed; there are organizations here that are delivering high-quality, professional services that people from anywhere can partake in," explained Brown. "The message is that North Omaha is alive and well." In the years to come, Brown envisions

even more investment in and significant growth for the center. "The Pleasantview housing project that was just demolished created several acres of land right next to us. As the plans get underway and are finalized for that area, my hope is that we will be able to create and provide senior housing for those 65 and older."

### North Omaha Means Business!

With investments surpassing \$20 million annually for five years running, North Omaha has become an emerging hotbed of economic activity.

To learn more, [ProjectNorthOmaha.org](http://ProjectNorthOmaha.org)

### National Exposure for Big Mama's Kitchen & Catering

The Travel Channel is highlighting North Omaha's Big Mama's Kitchen & Catering as one of 101 great places to eat around America. Patricia Barron's establishment will be featured in a special series set to air around Thanksgiving. Watch for more information at [www.bigmamaskitchen.com](http://www.bigmamaskitchen.com).

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## North Omaha Neighbors Enjoying a Taste of Chicago

Brothers Rodney and Roger Tanksley are serving a bit of Chicago to North Omaha and neighbors there are eating it up. Together with their mother Arlene Green, the Tanksleys opened Chi-Town Chicken last March in a former jazz club at 22<sup>nd</sup> and Lake Street. "We're bringing a Chicago-style fast food environment to the

Omaha restaurant scene," said Roger, the restaurant manager. "We add our own special seasoning to our chicken, and we have our own special mild sauce. It gives a flavor that's different from any other chicken place in the city right now." The sauce may be mild, but the community's response to Chi-Town's fried fare has been red hot. "They're

liking this. We're seeing a lot of business," said Rodney, the head chef. Chi-Town Chicken's sole location is carry-out only, but expansion plans are already cooking. "We're saving every week for Chi-Town Chicken number two," said Rodney. The family hopes to open a second, bigger location next spring in either North Omaha or downtown.

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## First National Bank Announces New 50<sup>th</sup> Ames Location

Tuesday, Oct. 20, was a great day in North Omaha. First National Bank announced Baker Place at 50th Street and Ames Avenue as the site of a new state-of-the-art retail branch. "The North Omaha Development Project (NODP) is focused on bringing investment to the North Omaha area,"

said Ed Cochran, NODP executive director. "This partner accomplishment is one that we are doubly pleased to be part of because First National Bank has been part of NODP since the project's inception. This investment sends a very positive message to other businesses that

expanding in the North Omaha community is a financially viable and wise decision." Dennis O'Neal, chairman of the First National Bank Community Development Corporation and co-chair of NODP says, "We believe this will be the catalyst for even more investment in the area."

## Live-Work Townhomes Project Transforms Land, Lives

NeighborWorks Omaha (formerly known as New Community Development Corporation) has transformed the landscape in the Long School Neighborhood. Now, it's set to transform lives.

NeighborWorks Omaha recently celebrated the completion of ten single-family townhomes intended for low-to-moderate income buyers.

"When the city approached us about doing the project, we were very eager to be part of it. It's designed to prompt residential and commercial growth in the community," said NeighborWorks

Omaha Housing Director Gloria Kellum.

The Long School Neighborhood "Live-and-Work Townhome Project" signifies an almost \$2 million public/private investment in the community. The tri-level, three bedroom townhomes boast 1,590 square feet. The first level is designed as a workspace.

"The project offers an opportunity for local entrepreneurs to live in the community and have their business in that same community. In this case, it would happen to be in their home, hence the name

'Live-and-Work Townhomes,'" said Kellum.

The townhomes list for \$168,000, but the city is offering deferred payment loans of up to \$60,000 to help defray costs.



Long School Townhomes

## Neighborhood Charrettes Coming to North Omaha

A series of design charrettes will be scheduled to address planning and design issues in the 16<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, 24<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Ames Avenue, 30<sup>th</sup> and Parker streets and the Adams Park area. A design charrette is a collaborative exercise where a team of experts works with the community to address the complex planning and design issues related to economic development. The stakeholders in the community are asked to participate in the charrette to share ideas about its future and offer feedback on the plan.

The charrettes, which are a more detailed version of the existing North Omaha Development Strategic plan, will be targeted to property owners, neighborhood residents and business owners. "The intent is to come away with what these areas should look like moving forward, how should they be developed," said Michael Maroney, president/CEO of Omaha Economic Development Corp. and chair of the North Omaha Development Project housing committee. Charrettes for the 30<sup>th</sup> and Parker streets area are expected to be an added focus. Razing the Pleasantview housing project freed up 20 acres of Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) land for redevelopment. "We're really open at this point, but I would think the majority of the site will be redeveloped for housing. The likelihood of that being public housing is probably pretty small just because there isn't money available from HUD," said Stan Timm, executive director of OHA.

Maroney expects the 30<sup>th</sup> and Parker streets and 24<sup>th</sup> and Lake streets charrettes to be well underway in December. "I think within a six month timeframe you're going to see a lot of work done in terms of developing the plan," said Timm. All of the North Omaha charrettes are funded by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and the Alliance Building Communities, Inc. Each will involve several public gatherings "with a lot of work going on in between," said Maroney. "It'll be a lot of information gathering from city departments like Public Works. How are their plans going to overlay or play into any potential development in this area? We'll be talking to the Parks & Recreation Department. What is their vision going forward? You also have to look at transportation, so there will be engagement with MAT in terms of what it sees." Maroney said the entire charrette process is expected to last approximately 6 months. Dates and locations for the first round of gatherings will likely be scheduled and publicized by the end of November.

## **“Get into Business for Yourself, Not by Yourself.”**

That is the theme of the first-ever [Midwest Franchise Seminar](#) coming up on Thursday, Nov. 12. Presented by the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership, the daylong event will include a variety of breakout sessions and networking opportunities for franchisees, franchisors and those interested in a franchise business. "This is going to be an outstanding venue for both entrepreneurs and franchisors looking for new or expanded business opportunities," said Winsley Durand, the Partnership's director of minority economic and retail development. Visit [OmahaChamber.org](#) to register or view the day's agenda.



Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

## **Investment in “Vision” Boosts North Omaha Development**

A \$5 million investment in brick and mortar is laying the foundation for new jobs and additional development in North Omaha. Omaha Vision Unlimited I, a four-story, mixed-use building, is scheduled to open in late 2010 at 13<sup>th</sup> and Cuming streets.

Majority owner Davis Business Ventures teamed with Bluestone Development to turn this vision into reality. "We want Omaha Vision Unlimited I to serve first as an economic development project to provide jobs for people from the African American community and

North Omaha and to provide the services and goods they want," said Lisa Laday-Davis, chief financial officer for Davis Companies and managing director for Davis Business Ventures.

"We structured the project to leverage minority opportunities and access. I hope it can serve as a model to other businesses and inspire additional investment within the minority community and North Omaha."

Davis Business Ventures will own and occupy office space on the second floor. Bluestone Development will own and oversee first floor retail and restaurant space and third and fourth floor apartments.

The 24 artist-style lofts will each average 600 square feet of living space.

## **ALDI Opening, Investment a Sign of Progress for Community**

It is more than a grand opening. It is a symbol of grand progress and grand promise for the North Omaha community. National discount grocer ALDI officially launched its newest Omaha store on Friday, October 30. Located at 4801 N. 30th St., the store represents a \$3.5 million investment in the community, a fresh alternative for area shoppers and up to 10 new jobs for the local economy.

"The ALDI investment showcases the

importance of revitalization of this key North Omaha corridor, which was identified as a focus area for the North Omaha Development Project (NODP)," said Ed Cochran, executive director of the NODP. "When a national company like ALDI recognizes North Omaha as a viable location for long-term business success, it sends a positive message to the community and other potential business investors. We commend

ALDI for their commitment to bring jobs and investment to North Omaha."

"We typically look for areas where we can grow along with the community and this new Omaha location is a great example," said Mark Bersted, ALDI Olathe division vice president. The new North Omaha store is ALDI's third location in Omaha. It also has an outlet in Bellevue and another in Council Bluffs.