



greater omaha chamber of commerce

**CONTACT: Karla Ewert – vice president - communications
(402) 978-7942 – office or (402) 320-4559 - cell**

CHAMBER ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF NORTH OMAHA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

*Business and Community Leaders' Steering Committee Comes Together to
Positively Impact North Omaha Economic Development Growth*

Omaha, Neb., Oct. 30, 2006 – At a news conference today, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce along with the steering committee of North Omaha community and business leaders announced the launch of the North Omaha Development Project. The announcement follows more than a year of preliminary planning discussions with numerous corporate leaders, elected officials, African American business leaders and North Omaha community leaders. The project brings business and community leaders together to find ways to positively impact the economic growth of the North Omaha community.

The initial study is intended to lay out an economic development strategy for North Omaha. The implementation strategy will be project-oriented and packaged so that interested parties in the private sector will readily understand the opportunities available in North Omaha. Included in the strategy will be recommendations for infrastructure improvements, community development opportunities and housing initiatives and other quality of life initiatives that will make the economic development strategy successful. The community will be offered opportunities to provide input at various stages of the project.

The timeline calls for an urban/community development planning consultant to be selected within the next 30 days to conduct the study, which is to be completed by June 2007. At that time, the recommendations will be presented along with the announcement of the hiring of a North Omaha Development Project director. Implementation plans are scheduled to begin immediately following the hiring of the director and will run through July 2010.

Dick Davis, CEO of Davis Companies, and Dennis O'Neal, executive vice president of First National Bank, will co-chair the steering committee. Approximately 44 individuals have been identified to serve on the steering committee.

David G. Brown, president and CEO of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce said at today's announcement, "This is a great day for Omaha, especially North Omaha. The Chamber is committed to creating an environment that promotes business and community growth throughout the region. In pursuit of this goal, the Chamber continues to identify opportunities that align with this objective. One of the most exciting opportunities to create jobs, investment and business development is what lies before us today in North Omaha."

Steering committee co-chairman Davis said, "I'm especially pleased with the group of committed people we've brought together to provide the synergy for economic growth in North Omaha. The committee will provide broad-based leadership that will give the community as a whole an avenue for open communication as evidenced by the steering committee co-chairmanship and its diverse membership. I expect great things to come as a result of this investment in our community."

"The steering committee, which will be vital to the ultimate success of this project, will work closely with the selected planning consultant to oversee the development of the plan. We ultimately envision numerous business projects to provide the economic growth needed in this vital urban area of our community. This is one more demonstration of First National Bank's commitment to growing Omaha," said O'Neal.

"Government works best when people work together," said Mayor Mike Fahey. "This project, along with the contributions of the steering committee and private sector, will supplement the improvements already made in the area and will capitalize on the positive history, culture and people of North Omaha. The potential is very exciting, and once the plan is implemented, it will provide the launching pad for the next generation of growth and prosperity in North Omaha."

Steering committee member and Omaha City Councilman Frank Brown said, "The Chamber has launched a new study initiative that I believe has merit and will build on the economic growth in North Omaha. This study will have deadlines and, equally important, an execution plan. The latter has never happened before and that alone sets it apart from other studies. Also, the Chamber came up with the funding to hire staff for this very important project. That, too, is a first. I look forward to working on this very important project for the future of North Omaha."

The study, comparable to the Destination Midtown study, will help the Chamber, the steering committee and the community identify opportunities within North Omaha and determine the next course of action. Initially, North Omaha is defined by Sorenson Parkway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, 16th Street on the east and 52nd Street on the west. However, surrounding area studies planned, completed or currently underway will clearly have an impact on the North Omaha boundaries and vice versa. The study will also address the transportation routes

between North Omaha and surrounding study areas including the 24th Street corridor to the south, the 16th Street corridor to the north, the 30th Street corridor to the north, the Ames Street corridor to the west and the Sorenson Parkway corridor to the west.

To date, the Chamber, several large corporations, private foundations, African American business leaders, North Omaha businesses and individuals have committed \$725,000 for the development study and three years of operating funds and staff support to implement the plan.

The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the North Omaha Development Project steering committee, will hire the study consultant, monitor the process and hire the North Omaha Development Project director. It is intended that the Chamber will house the project director and provide in-kind support in public policy, economic development and communication services to the project.

David Brown pledged his commitment to keep the community informed of the progress and opportunities for involvement in the study and implementation phases. He encouraged people interested in receiving information about the process to sign-up at info@ProjectNorthOmaha.org or call the Chamber at (402) 346-5000.

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The mission of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce is to increase business, investment and employment in the Greater Omaha area.

Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce • 1301 Harney St. • Omaha, NE 68102-1804
Phone (402) 346-5000 • Fax (402) 346-7050