

*This is the second in a series of weekly articles focused on individual visions for the economic future of North Omaha. Each article will feature the comments of a North Omaha Development Project steering committee member.*

*Your next chance to learn more about the project and to provide input is at the July 19 meeting at Omaha North High School, 4410 North 36<sup>th</sup> St. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in the Viking Center. An ADA accessible entrance is located at the northeast music hall door.*

## **Metropolitan Community College Partnering in North Omaha Study, Excited About Future**

Change is coming to Metropolitan Community College's Fort Omaha campus at 30<sup>th</sup> and Fort streets, and it is accompanied by exciting news for the North Omaha community. A \$12 million dollar project will bring about a new institute for culinary arts and the creation of a new entrance on the south end of the campus just off Sorensen Parkway.

"This will open the Fort Omaha campus to the community, and hopefully, the community will open up to us," said Jim Grotrian, the vice-president for external relations at Metro.

Grotrian's position extends into community affairs, economic development and workforce development-related issues, making him a natural choice to represent the college on the steering committee for the North Omaha Development Project, an initiative of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce launched to encourage economic growth in that sector of the city. The steering committee includes more than 40 business and community leaders.

"This is an important project because it has all the right partners involved. They are ready to step up and execute the kinds of recommendations that are necessary to make a difference in North Omaha," said Grotrian.

He said Metro is proud to be one of the partners in the process, eager to work with other entities to make sure the residents of North Omaha "have the same opportunities as people in the rest of the community -- from education to economic development to jobs."

Grotrian said Metro is already serving as an example to other organizations by making a capital investment in the community.

"We hope the \$12 million project we're developing at the south entrance of the Fort Omaha campus will be an anchor for the level of activity we hope to see coming out of the study." He said the new institute for culinary arts will be a multi-purpose facility that the community will be able to use for meetings and other gatherings.

Grotrian said Metro is also bolstering North Omaha by continually offering affordable, accessible education to its residents. That on-going contribution will "help jumpstart the kind of progress the study will identify as possible," he added.

Ten years from now, Grotrian envisions a North Omaha that is “on a positive path to good-paying jobs available in the area, a local economy that supports the needs of the residents who live in that area and cultural opportunities that are world-class.”

He said he is extremely optimistic because the North Omaha Development Project is backed by top-notch leadership through the Chamber and the members of the steering committee.

“It’s important to Metro and to the city as a whole to do this right because the residents in this North Omaha study area are important to our community.”

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*The North Omaha Development Project is a focused commitment of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, corporate leaders, elected officials, African American business leaders and the North Omaha community to make strategic investments in North Omaha. The study area is Sorensen Parkway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, 16<sup>th</sup> Street on the east and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street on the west. For more information, email [info@projectnorthomaha.org](mailto:info@projectnorthomaha.org), visit [www.ProjectNorth Omaha.org](http://www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org) or call (402) 346-5000.*