



## Academy Supports Personal, Public Development

A unique learning opportunity is encouraging positive development on two fronts — personal and public. The Planning and Real Estate Development Academy, a project of the Omaha Economic Development Corporation (OEDC), is designed to teach members of the public the “ins and outs” of the planning and real estate development process.

Facilitator Bridget Hadley, OEDC’s economic development director, said the program, launched in October 2007, “can help ease tensions between communities and development partners, creating ‘win-win’ projects for all participants.”

The eight-week curriculum is offered annually in the fall to up to 20 people. The class meets weekly. Academy topics and guest speakers discuss the city’s master plan and its elements, affordable housing and infill development, sustainable communities, an overview of the real estate development process, the function of feasibility studies, and development tools, resources and practices.

According to OEDC, the academy is “part of an overall strategy to prepare citizens to proactively engage in development resulting from the North Omaha Development Project study.”

The Greater Omaha Chamber’s North Omaha Development Project (NODP) is an Academy sponsor, along with OEDC, The Neighborhood Center and Empower Omaha.

Ed Cochran, executive director of NODP, said, “It is important for neighborhood stakeholders to understand the development process. It is more complex and time-consuming than most people think. But, understanding the concepts gives neighborhood stakeholders not only an appreciation for those concepts but insight into how they, the stakeholders, might effectively influence the process.”

Thanks to its sponsors, the Planning and Real Estate Development Academy is provided free of charge. Participation is determined through an application process.

It is OEDC’s stated hope that the Planning and Real Estate Development Academy will serve as a model to enable all of Omaha’s residents to gain an understanding of the city’s real estate development and planning processes and empower them to positively impact development choices.

OEDC’s next academy will begin in the fall of 2010. For more information, contact Hadley at (402) 346-2300 or by e-mail at [bhadley@omahaeconomic.com](mailto:bhadley@omahaeconomic.com). You can also visit OEDC’s Web site at <http://www.omahaeconomic.com>. Click on the “Activities” link.