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B Street Collision Center Expanding to North Omaha - Opening Boosts North Omaha Development Project

OMAHA, Neb., March 25, 2008 – Today, B Street Collision Center announced the opening of a new location at 2340 Paul St., bringing new jobs and new investment to North Omaha.

“The decision to expand our business to North Omaha was largely based on the recent development of downtown, the current development of North Downtown, and the exciting plans underway for North Omaha,” said Anthony Klotz, one of the new location’s owners.

Klotz said B Street’s investment in equipment and remodeling will top \$500,000 by the end of the first year. The new center will initially employ five people with plans to expand the payroll to eight to ten over the next year. We anticipate hiring from the North Omaha community. Tony Wiese, another owner, said B Street will be an energetic and involved neighbor.

“B Street Collision Center plans to take an active role in the development of North Omaha, using its resources and staff whenever possible to assist in developing the local economy,” said Wiese.

B Street's owners said the Paul St. location was especially appealing because of the large role the north 24th street corridor plays in the North Omaha Development Project (NODP), an initiative of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce aimed at encouraging economic growth in that sector of the city. NODP Executive Director Ed Cochran hopes B Street’s investment in North Omaha will inspire others.

“We agree that this is a smart economic decision for B Street and brings services, jobs and a community business partner to the area,” said Cochran. “I also believe that B Street moving into the area will send a positive message to diverse business owners that expanding into the North Omaha community can be a financially viable option for their growth plans as well.”

Winsley Durand, the Chamber’s director of minority economic development, said more businesses are starting to realize the tremendous economic opportunity that lies in North Omaha, an underserved market with more than \$60 million dollars of unmet potential.

“There is a great deal of demand for goods and services, but few providers,” said Durand. “B Street has utilized a lot of information to determine that placing jobs and investment in North Omaha is a solid business decision. We are excited about the progress of the area and B Street’s commitment as both an employer of North Omaha residents and a good corporate neighbor. It’s already reached out to help groups like Habitat for Humanity and 100 Black Men of Omaha.”

Anthony Klotz said the new B Street location would provide the same industry-leading customer service, quality and turn-around time that customers have come to expect from B Street's west location at 132nd & F St.

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The North Omaha Development Project is a commitment of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, African American business leaders, the North Omaha community, corporate leaders and elected officials to develop a strategy that would result in significant business investments in North Omaha. The North Omaha Development Project plan is the culmination of a yearlong study process that capitalized on the area's greatest assets – the people of the community and the rich heritage.

This plan builds upon the economic rebirth already taking place throughout North Omaha. Located just north of Omaha's downtown, the North Omaha study area is bordered by Sorensen Parkway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, 16th Street on the east and 52nd Street on the west.

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