



Volume One, Number Two



Professor Jonna Holland (EMBA '91) received her Ph.D. in marketing from University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She teaches advertising and consumer behavior and manages the CBA internship program.



### CBA project for non-profits wins UNO's first service learning award

This year the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) awarded its first Outstanding Service-Learning Faculty Award to a College of Business Administration (CBA) professor, Jonna Holland. Dr. Holland received the award for a project she developed for an undergraduate advertising course in which student teams design advertising campaigns for a non-profit organization.

"Service learning occurs when community service and learning in the course come together," said Holland, who distinguishes *experiential learning*, i.e. projects for for-profit companies from *service learning*, projects for non-profit organizations. "Service learning reinforces the importance of community service through projects that also help students achieve the learning objectives of the class."

Dr. Holland has been developing service learning projects in her classes for the past six years and has worked with 15 different community agencies. She began developing hands-on projects when she realized that employers expected new graduates to be able to produce marketing materials in addition to planning campaigns. An active volunteer herself, she was very aware that students could have a significant impact on non-profit agencies with small budgets—especially for "luxuries" like advertising.

In spring 2005, student teams designed advertising for the Omaha Hearing School for Children. The campaign that the Hearing School finally adopted was designed by students Jennifer Hille, Sara Hanson, and Jennifer Corbett. The results of their work can be seen in a brochure for the annual fund drive (pictured right).

"It was a wonderful experience," said Karen Rossi, executive director. "We are using many of the ideas from the student "ad agencies"—only tweaking things a bit. It is so instructive to see the Omaha Hearing School in new ways, from the fresh perspective that students bring."

In addition to the experience gained by designing and executing an advertising campaign for a "real" client, students discovered the world of non-profit agencies and the satisfactions of volunteering. As one student commented, "I thoroughly enjoyed helping the Omaha Hearing School. I had no idea that it even existed. There are now thirty-plus students that know almost everything about it."

Dr. Holland observes that service learning projects motivate students as well as spark interest in community involvement.

"Many students believe they will be expected to sweep the floor or play with the kids. Through this experience, they learn that they can use their professional skills to make a difference for a very worthwhile cause and for an agency that truly needs their skills."





## College of BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

### Greetings from the dean

The students, staff, faculty and administrators welcome you to the College of Business Administration. This is the second issue of the College's newsletter, *The Advantage*. Thanks to all of you who offered your comments and encouragement on the inaugural issue. Please continue to write or call with your observations. The purpose of *The Advantage* is to update you about alumni achievements, college developments, and news that will be of interest to you.

This issue of the newsletter contains several stories about the College's Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC). NBDC was founded in 1977 and has a statewide mission to provide consulting services to small businesses. In addition, NBDC has programs in manufacturing process improvement, pollution prevention, government contract procurement, and business training. In 2004, NBDC programs had a \$280 million impact on the state's economy.

Please note our November through May calendar of events on the back cover. In particular, you are invited to participate in the Alumni Golf Scramble and Dinner on May 12. We will begin the event with a shotgun start at 12:30 pm and follow with dinner at 5:30pm.

One of the most enjoyable components of my job is to host alumni, friends, and potential students and their parents in our building, Roskens Hall. I invite each one of you to contact me either by telephone or e-mail and schedule a visit. I would enjoy giving you a tour of our new laboratories and student commons, and talking with you about our programs.

Warm Regards,

Louis G. Pol  
Dean, College of Business Administration

**Dean**

Louis G. Pol

**Associate Dean**

Amy Risch Rodie

**Assistant Dean**

Robert E. Bernier

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**IN THIS ISSUE**

We're proud of the contributions of our students, alumni, and staff to the recovery efforts in the Gulf coast. Read more about their experiences on pages 9-11.



# SNAPSHOTS



## Scholarship Reception

Conway Memorial Scholar **Tiffany Hanus**, **Eileen Conway**, and **Bob Bernier**, assistant dean, get acquainted during the third annual reception to honor CBA 2005-2006 scholarship donors and recipients. The reception was held on the patio east of Roskens Hall on a beautiful afternoon in September. Nearly 220 attended, where many scholarship recipients welcomed the opportunity to meet their scholarship donor(s). On hand were 150 CBA scholarship recipients, 21 scholarship donors, 33 CBA faculty members, nine CBA staff members, and four UNO and NU Foundation administrators. A record \$382,926.50 was awarded to 210 students for 2005-2006, via 67 different college and departmental scholarships.



## Anniversary Celebration

The Executive MBA's 30th Anniversary celebration was held at Champions Run on September 30th. Over 80 graduates and faculty enjoyed dinner and music provided by *Sound de mi Tierra*. Honored at the event were three EMBA alumni and three faculty members, each for outstanding achievement and representing one of the decades since the program's founding. Honorees are pictured from L to R: First Decade Distinguished Graduate, **Fred Petersen** (EMBA '81), retired president and CEO of OPPD; First Decade Distinguished Professor, **Dr. David Ambrose**; Third Decade Distinguished Professor, **Dr. Robert Mathis**; Second Decade Distinguished Graduate, **Dr. John Waddell** (EMBA '94), veterinarian and entrepreneur; and Second Decade Distinguished Professor, **Dr. David Volkman**. Not pictured: Third Decade Distinguished Graduate, **Jane Gilbert** (EMBA '96), Senior VP, American Red Cross.



## Skybox at Cox Classic

CBA was a sponsor of the 2005 *Cox Classic Presented by Chevrolet Golf Tournament* at Champions Run last August. The college hosted Skybox #45, and enjoyed a fabulous view of the 18<sup>th</sup> green throughout the Nationwide tour's Omaha event. Over the four days of competition, 135 alumni, students, faculty and staff, and friends of the college stopped by for a cold beverage and to say hello. In the final weeks before the tournament, CBA gave away nearly 375 free admission tickets. A good time was had by all, and the college is looking forward to a sponsorship again next year. Free tickets and more information will be available mid-summer for the August event.

Pictured in the Skybox are: (foreground) **Bill Swanson**, assistant to vice chancellor at UNO and wife **Peggy Swanson**; (background) **Jim Jones**, associate professor of management; **Janet Tschudin**, a Nebraska Business Development Center director.



# NEWS



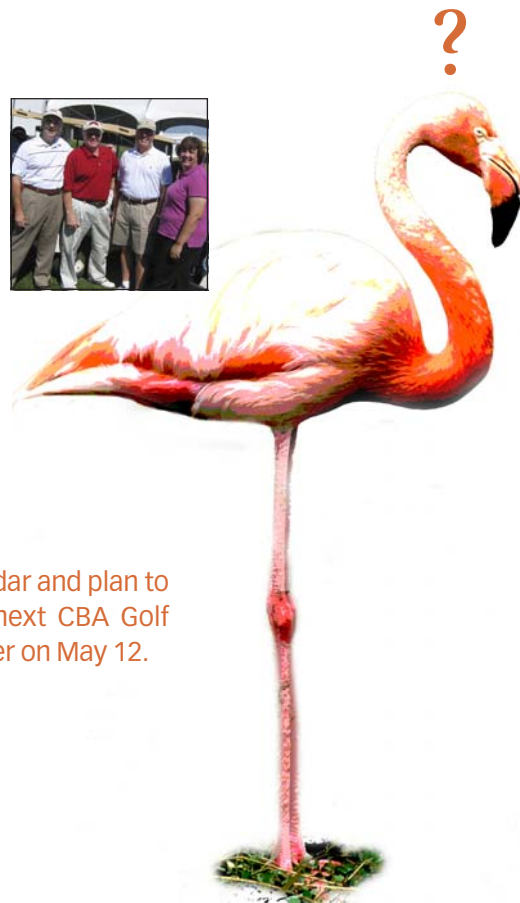
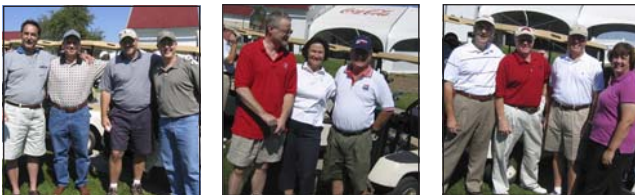
## CBA and alumni inaugurate a new tradition

Alumni, faculty and administration joined colleagues, friends, and spouses to enjoy friendly competition at the first CBA Alumni Golf Outing and Reception in September. The winning team from NBDC came into the clubhouse at Eagle Hills with an eight under par in the 18-hole scramble.

Many agreed that the putting stance (dubbed “the flamingo”) demonstrated by National Advisory Board member John Hoich was a highlight of the event. Showing truly remarkable accuracy with his signature stance, John sank putts of 30-plus feet on multiple occasions.

Hole sponsors for the event were CBIZ Blackman & Associates, Egis Technologies, Great Western Bank, Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), Nebraska Choral Arts Society, and the UNO Alumni Association.

Winning team from l to r: Tim Grant, MBA '99, Mike Hall, director of procurement assistance program (NBDC); Roger McCullough, consultant, Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NBDC); and Bob Bernier, assistant dean and state director of Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC).



Mark your calendar and plan to join us for the next CBA Golf Outing and Dinner on May 12.





### Hollis and Helen Baright Foundation

The Hollis and Helen Baright Foundation funds an annual scholarship for the University of Nebraska at Omaha real estate program in addition to funding the endowment of the Baright Professorship of Real Estate. Hollis Baright was a successful Omaha real estate entrepreneur. The Foundation was inducted into CBA's Lucas Society in 2003.

## Real estate researcher envisions center at UNO

This fall, Steven D Shultz, Ph.D., became the first Baright Professor of Real Estate at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Dr. Shultz earned his Ph.D. (1993) from the University of Arizona. His teaching interests include principles of real estate, real estate appraisal, and geographic information system (GIS) technologies.

Professor Shultz' research interests focus on appraisal methodologies that combine GIS-based data with statistical modeling to quantify the determinants of property sales. His approach improves the accuracy of appraisals and tax assessments, and demonstrates the economic values of various environmental amenities. His recent work has been published in the *Journal of Property Tax Assessment and Administration*, *Land Economics*, and *Journal of Real Estate and Finance Economics*.

Dr. Shultz became interested in CBA's real estate program partly because of its long and successful history and because of its strong ties to Omaha's real estate community. Alumni and others in the community actively support the program through scholarships, endowment funds, and internship opportunities.

"I would like to strengthen the research aspects of the real estate program and have UNO students, both undergrads and MBA students, actively involved as paid research assistants," said Dr. Shultz. "I envision this program becoming a 'real estate research center' for public and private sectors in Omaha and potentially statewide."

The first major research effort will involve developing a GIS-based database for the entire Omaha metro area. "This will enable us to quantify the factors influencing property values and help us better predict changes in these values," said Dr. Shultz. "Eventually, we will be able to map commercial property values across the Omaha area."

Longer term, Professor Shultz plans to map and quantify changing land values in the rural areas surrounding both Omaha and Lincoln. Of par-

ticular interest is how water availability and recent changes to Nebraska's water laws impact development prices across the state. He is also interested in promoting residential and commercial developments that are compatible with sustainable and efficient urban growth.

Professor Shultz was previously an associate professor at North Dakota State University and before that an economist at the Center for Research and Training in Tropical Agriculture in Costa Rica.

**"Our goal is to get timely and relevant information about property value and the factors that influence it to real estate professionals, local governments and the public."**



# NEWS

## Investment Science Program to manage \$1 million portfolio

**B**eginning in January 2006, the University of Nebraska at Omaha will offer a unique hands-on course in fixed income asset management to graduate students in the College of Business Administration. Students in the course will have an opportunity to learn theoretical models related to fixed income management and to apply their knowledge through the administration of a \$1,000,000 portfolio over the 2006 calendar year.

The \$1 million is an actual portfolio of fixed income assets held at First National Bank of Omaha. The course provides three hours of graduate credit and meets once a month over the 2006 calendar year. At the end of the calendar year, the students will present the performance of the portfolio to First National Bank executives.

This exciting course offers students the chance to experience real world applications of theoretical models over a period longer than the typical three month semester. It also provides an arena in which graduate students interact with top executives in the Omaha area who manage fixed-income asset portfolios, and offers the opportunity to participate in an international student investment management competition at the R.I.S.E. symposium in the spring of 2007.



NBDC State Director Bob Bernier receives award from ASBDC Board Chair Scott Daugherty, state director of the North Carolina Small Business and Technology Development Center.

## Bernier honored by ASBDC

**N**ebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) State Director Robert E. Bernier was honored at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) with its first Meritorious Service Award. Bernier is the nation's longest serving Small Business Development Center (SBDC) state director.

Bernier was appointed director of NBDC on August 1, 1979, about 15 months before the SBDC's program became authorized when President Jimmy Carter signed the Small Business Development Center Act of 1980. NBDC was organized in 1977 under a U.S. Small Business Administration demonstration project called University Business Development Centers. David Ambrose, professor of Marketing, was the first director. NBDC was among two of the eight demonstration centers to implement statewide service, a key component of the authorizing legislation.

In 1981, Bernier served as secretary-treasurer of the SBDC Directors Association and chaired the committee that guided its transformation into the Association of Small Business Development Centers. As part of that effort, he wrote the ASBDC by-laws. Bernier later served on the ASBDC board of directors, including serving as its president in 1990. In 1989, he organized the first ASBDC membership services office. In 1996, he transferred the ASBDC office from Omaha to the Washington D.C. area where it added the government relations function to the membership services function. Bernier has also been active in the ASBDC accreditation process, serving on review teams to more than a dozen state SBDC programs.



## Lucas Society chooses 2005 members

This fall, the Lucas Society inducted Herb Sklenar, Gene and Ann Spence, and Merrill Lynch, the global financial management company, recognizing their contributions to the success of the College of Business Administration. They were honored at a dinner and ceremony on November 3 at the Milo Bail Student Center.



Gene Spence, former chairman of the board of Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) and his wife, Ann Spence, former owner and CEO of Spence Title Services, Inc., established the Ward Y. Lindley and Geo. T. Lindley Endowed Fund for Business Administration.

Herb Sklenar, former president and CEO of Vulcan Materials Company, recently established a fund to provide full-ride scholarships for undergraduate students in the College of Business Administration.



The Merrill Lynch Foundation gift will support a summer Investment Sciences Day camp program in addition to providing support to the CBA Investment Sciences Program.



## CBA students welcome renovated student commons

A new technology-equipped and comfortably furnished student commons opened this fall in Roskens Hall to rave reviews. The popular renovation, based on a needs and wishes survey taken by CBA student senator Joshua Shipman, was funded with a grant from the Nebraska Bankers' Association for a proposal submitted by CBA's Information Technology (IT) department.

## Those who serve



**David Ambrose**—Board of Directors of the National Safety Council, Omaha chapter; Treasurer and member of the board of Easter Seals of Nebraska

**Lynn Harland**—2003/04 president of the Midwest Academy of Management

**Laura Ilcisin**—Board of Directors of RetireSafe, grassroots advocacy organization for older Americans, headquartered in Washington, D.C.

**Kate King**—Nebraska State Board of Public Accountancy (Governor's Appointment); Board of Trustees, Foundation of the Nebraska Society of Certified Public Accountants; Board of Directors, Creighton University Medical Center Service League

**Scott Knapp**—Executive Board of the Greater Nebraska Workforce Investment Board

**Loren Kucera**—Past president, Nebraska Economic Development Corporation

**Graham Mitenko**—President, Academy of Economics and Finance

**Rebecca Morris**—President of the North American Case Research Association (NACRA)

**Desarae Mueller-Fichpain**—Past president, Midwest International Trade Association

**Cliff Mosteller**—Treasurer of Community Development Resources

**Kim Sosin**—Vice president and president-elect of the Nebraska Economics and Business Association



# ALUMS



## Promotes fast growth for slow cooking

No doubt about it, Emily Blodgett is an achiever. While completing the coursework

for two UNO master's degrees, she also worked as a graduate assistant for the Nebraska Business Development Center. In 2001, she completed both an MBA and an MA in psychology. Emily then joined the ConAgra marketing team as assistant marketing manager for the Healthy Choice ice cream division. Two years later, she transitioned to the Wolfgang Puck brand as associate marketing manager.



Today, as associate marketing manager of the Frozen Foods Group, Blodgett contributes to the highly successful promotion of ConAgra's new Crock-Pot Classics product. Taking strategic advantage of Rival's brand name recognition, ConAgra licensed the Crock-Pot name for the new line of frozen entrees. After launching a \$20 million plus advertising campaign last summer, Crock-Pot Classics surpassed the \$100 million sales mark in less than one year.

### **Ken Mayer, MBA, 1983**

Freelance reporter for *The Reader*, Omaha, Nebraska, was selected for the second annual Arts Journalism Institute in Classical Music and Opera. He was one of 25 critics, editors and reporters chosen to participate as fellows by Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. The Institute was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts.

### **Scott Kuhlman, BSBA, 1989**

Founder and CEO of Minneapolis-based Kuhlman Co., and his wife, Susan, opened the first of three planned clothing stores in Nebraska at Village Pointe this summer. The stores feature stylish men's shirts, ties and suits. The chain also has five women's stores. Kuhlman is pursuing an aggressive expansion strategy, currently opening stores at the rate of 1.5 per week.

### **James E. Kelley, MBA, 1990**

CEO at OGM Labs, a portfolio-oriented technology transfer company located in Omaha at Scott Technology Center.

### **Kathy Shotkoski, BSBA, 1995**

Promoted to vice president of human resources and training, Securities America, Inc.

### **Michael Giannou, MBA, 2000**

Joined MSI Systems Integrators as vice president of Intel Solutions.

### **Ken Hansen, EMBA, 2001**

Became University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) assistant vice chancellor for facilities management and planning November 1. Hansen was a 29-year employee of the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) where he served as division manager since 1997. Previously, Hansen served as manager of facilities and operations at OPPD, which included the startup and operation of the Fort Calhoun Power Station training center and administration facilities.

### **Heather Gust, MBA, 2004**

Moved from West Corporation to Union Pacific. She is a senior analyst in the Revenue Accounting Department.

### **Amelia Latham, MBA, 2004**

Promoted to expense control analyst at Regions Financial Corporation, Cordova, Tennessee.

### **Rob Parolek, MBA, 2004**

Received the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Volunteer of the Year Award for his acclaimed beautification work at the Joslyn Castle. He obtained three grants to replace trees that had been lost, garnered \$11,500 in funding to repopulate the grounds, did the research necessary to determine proper tree placement, and coordinated the planting of these specimens.

### **Jeff Muhlecke, MBA, 2005**

Interned at Securities America, Inc. while enrolled in the MBA program. Upon graduating, he accepted a full-time position as fee engine specialist at Securities America.

Dr. Richard File, chair of the department of accounting, welcomes University of New Orleans student Megan Pleak to CBA



## From UNO to UNO—hurricane changes grad student’s plans

**W**hen the mayor urged residents of New Orleans to evacuate in advance of Katrina’s destruction, graduate student Megan Pleak packed her car and prepared to return home to Blair, Nebraska. Her exit, two days prior to the hurricane, was swift. She made the long drive without difficulty and reached home in time to carry out plans to participate in a friend’s wedding.

Some belongings were left behind in a building that was expected to sustain severe damage from strong winds and heavy rainfall. Of more concern to Megan was the unfinished status of her Master of Tax Accounting degree at the University of New Orleans and its impact on plans to graduate in December, return to Nebraska and accept the accountant position at a Lincoln firm in January.

Megan contacted the Graduate College at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in early September. Like other students displaced by

Katrina, she had no official records to confirm her academic status. Yet the University of Nebraska at Omaha welcomed her as a graduate student and referred her to Richard Ortman, director of the Master of Accounting program to discuss the possibility of enrolling in graduate accounting classes to complete her degree.

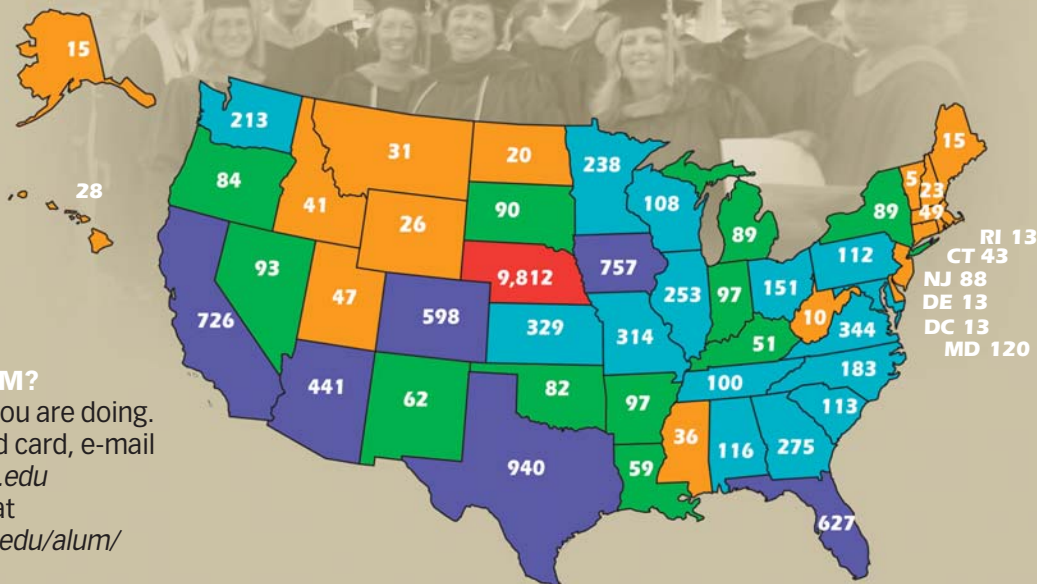
Her 12 credit hour class schedule came together as if it had been planned. She joined classes already in session at the start of the third week. The students welcomed her and offered their notes to help her catch up with her course work.

Looking back, Megan can’t believe how easily things fell into place. She is grateful for the consideration she received and, after conferring with her future employer, she has decided to transfer her credits to the Master of Professional Accounting program at UNO and graduate in 2006

## Where are they?

18,250 UNO CBA alums

- 1–49
- 50–99
- 100–399
- 400–999
- 9,000+



### ARE YOU AN ALUM?

Let us know what you are doing. Return the attached card, e-mail [lpol@mail.unomaha.edu](mailto:lpol@mail.unomaha.edu) or use online form at <http://cba.unomaha.edu/alum/>

# Email from the Gulf



"Lierman, Matt E NWO"

09/22/2005 04:52 PM

To "Lex Kaczmarek" <kaczmarek@mail.unomaha.edu>  
cc  
Subject Experiences in the Gulf

I've attached a picture of myself (on the right) and Dick Taylor.

Things are very bad here (for the people affected; personally, I'm very thankful for what I have and for being able to help), and I've seen the worst areas affected by the floods. New Orleans is a disaster, and Slidell is very bad as well. I traveled to the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal and viewed the breach in the wall. I am attaching pictures, which reveal the break while the background shows the aftermath and what happened to the poor souls who lived in the wake. The situation is such that first responders have not yet combed the area for remains. Our contacts have told us that there will be many bodies in this area, and they are bringing in cadaver dogs to search in the next few days.

Three engineers and I walked the new levy they are building, and the scene of destruction is just horrifying and depressing, to say the least. Remnants of people's lives and livelihood lay among the detritus, which humbles those of us who are alive to witness it all. If you look closely, you can see orange paint on some of the buildings and windows; meaning that the home was searched for a live person. Very very sad.

With reference to the MBA program, here are some pretty interesting facts. On this mission, Dick Taylor is the Mission Manager - that is he is the chief, the big-wig, CEO, etc. In less than three weeks, Dick, along with myself and other mission specialists, have built up a staff of over 350 people, set up offices throughout Louisiana in that same time period, and been given a budget of \$176 million dollars to do it with. We anticipate using these funds in just over a month and installing over 28,000 roofs on homes scattered throughout the state. In terms of logistics, personnel management and budgeting, it is extremely difficult but we are on target with all of our projections and continue to oversee a large staff of people and manage the funds very closely.



MBA students **Matt Lierman**, author of the email, and **Dick Taylor** traded the classroom for the opportunity to serve as members of a Planning and Response Team for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under the guidance of FEMA. They spent four and eight weeks in New Orleans, respectively.

Matt, a real estate specialist attorney for USACE, served as mission specialist. He prepared legal and contractual documents, managed more than 400 people in the field, kept track of personnel as they moved in and out of the area, and moved manpower to different regions as needed. Dick, also with USACE, is a civil engineer in the planning and project management division. He was the mission manager.

Matt joined USACE in 2003. This mission is his second recovery effort. Dick has been with USACE since 1991, including a one year assignment in Washington, DC where he worked in the EPA Office of Emergency and Remedial Response supporting the agency's Superfund program. He has worked on numerous recovery efforts including Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and the Florida hurricanes in 2004 and 2005.



## Grad takes Red Cross leadership role during crisis

As the American Red Cross' new senior vice president for service area support, Jane Gilbert (EMBA '96) finds herself in the eye of the storm aftermath. Prior to her appointment, Gilbert was responsible for one of the Red Cross' eight service areas as executive for the Mid-Atlantic Region. Now, in her newly created senior management position, all eight areas report to her.

The eight service areas of the Red Cross facilitate the oversight and cooperation of all staff in the field. They provide assistance with disaster response and readiness, community preparedness, communication, marketing, government relations and fund raising, back-office functions and volunteer recruitment, retention and development.

Gilbert was a development officer with Boys and Girls Clubs of Omaha when she joined UNO's Executive MBA program. About half way through the program, she was hired as the deputy director of marketing and development for the Heartland Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC). Within a year Gilbert was selected for ARC StarTrack, the elite national leadership succession training program. Three years later she became the CEO of the Greater Hartford, Connecticut chapter, one of the 40 largest ARC chapters in the U.S., and five years later Gilbert was selected to be the Mid-Atlantic service area executive.

Although Gilbert wasn't scheduled to start her new national assignment until September 12, Hurricane Katrina hit and she went to work immediately. Selling her home in Raleigh, NC, finding permanent digs in

Washington, moving, hiring staff and organizing her new position have taken a back seat to supporting the needs of hurricane victims and Red Cross field staff on the front lines of disaster relief.

A recent email from Gilbert summed up her situation. In response to a request for her staff to send a photo to use in the Executive MBA 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Awards program (she was named the Outstanding Graduate of the 1995-2004 decade), she wrote, "What staff??? I'm up here by myself with no time to even think about hiring staff!!! It could be months before I can think about that, and in the meantime I'm just robbing help from whomever has a smile on their face!!!"



## NBDC directors assist small business recovery in the gulf coast



Two of Nebraska Business Development Center's (NBDC) outstanding loan packagers, Loren Kucera, Wayne center director, and Odee Ingersoll, Kearney center director, volunteered to serve in the Association of Small Business Development Center (ASBDC) Katrina Relief program. This program is organizing and deploying about 100 Small Business Development Center (SBDC) consultants from across the nation to help individuals whose businesses were damaged or destroyed by the hurricane.

Ingersoll was assigned to the Hattiesburg, Mississippi area with five other SBDC consultants from Tennessee, Florida, New Mexico, Arizona and Massachusetts. The six member team worked with clients from the south central Mississippi area from September 26 through October 7. Kucera travelled to the region in mid-October.

During Ingersoll's service, the team met with and assisted an estimated 150 persons or organizations. The consultants focused their efforts on the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, meeting one-on-one with clients, evaluating their situations, and providing recommendations.

The effort to help small business owners re-establish their businesses is a key to restoring the economic vitality of the Gulf region. But, according to Ingersoll, there are issues that will hamper the recovery such as widespread under reporting of income by business owners, uninsured property or business assets, and low adult literacy rates.

"There is not only an immediate need for financial assistance for businesses that were directly affected by hurricane Katrina," says Ingersoll, "but also for businesses that escaped initial physical injury."

A very large percentage of the population of Mississippi is entrepreneurial and create their own jobs. Those without insurance or the ability to qualify for disaster relief loans will have to use the profits from their business or their personal disposable income to rebuild their business.

Past experience in hurricane relief indicates that the success of small businesses in getting SBA disaster loans greatly increases when they are assisted by SBDC loan consultants. The decision for business owners is whether to risk reestablishing their business in the same area when their customer base has been significantly reduced or in some cases eliminated.

# John Hoich and NBDC, a close association

**T**hough not yet 50 years old, John Hoich is already a legendary Omaha entrepreneur. He began his business at the age of 16. The oldest of six children, he and his siblings were placed in foster homes when his mother died. The only asset left to him was a Sears Craftsman lawn mower that he had partially paid for with money from a newspaper route. He used that lawn mower to start a lawn maintenance business that grew into a multimillion dollar business with more than 350 employees.

Today, Hoich's U.S. Grounds is a successful government contractor that maintains the grounds of four air force bases. He recently spun off Liberty Grounds Maintenance, his service for large Omaha firms, to its employees. Both were accomplished with assistance from the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), a department of the University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Business Administration.

It began in 1974. Hoich set out with an ethic he describes as "focus, consistency and persistence." His first business loan was \$750 to buy a used pickup. He hired his first employee in 1978. He did his own payroll and taxes until 1985, when he hired a bookkeeper. By that time he had 60 employees.

In the meantime, Hoich graduated from Westside High School and began university coursework. At UNO he took classes in both real estate and counseling. He studied counseling because his father, an alcoholic,



From l to r: Desarae Mueller-Fichepain, director, Nebraska Business Development Center's (NBDC) EntrepreneurShop; John Hoich; Mary Graff, NBDC procurement technical assistance consultant

abandoned his family and he wanted to know more so others could be helped. But, it was real estate that interested him most, partly due to the mentorship of CBA's Professor R. Wayne Wilson.

## Real estate investments grow

**P**rofessor Wilson encouraged Hoich to use his earnings to invest in real estate. Further encouragement came from members of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). He began with a house at 23<sup>rd</sup> and B Streets that he purchased on a land contract for \$6,500 and sold several years later for \$13,000. He then bought a duplex, which he still owns. He lived in one side and rented the other. His investments expanded so that now he owns 12 shopping centers, more than 1,000 apartment units, and about 100 acres of development property.

Hoich's first encounter with NBDC came in 1995 when Jerry Dalton, then manager of NBDC's procurement technical assistance program, helped him prepare a proposal to maintain the grounds at Offutt Air Force Base. Hoich first attempted to get the Offutt con-

tract in 1988. He was the low bidder. But, the contract officer determined that he would have lost money on the contract, and that wasn't good for him or the government. The second lowest bidder won the contract but lost it three years later for poor performance. Hoich was given an interim contract to pick up the work. When

the maintenance contract was put out to bid again, the Air Force had changed its policy to the lowest *and* best bid (ability to perform). Dalton at NBDC helped him prepare the winning proposal.

## New contracts with AFBs

**I**n the years since, NBDC has continued as a resource for new contract opportunities and information about changes in specifications and bid rules. With NBDC's help, Hoich now has grounds contracts at Offutt, Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi, and in Fort Benning, Georgia. Michael Hall, NBDC's procurement assistance manager, works with Hoich together with NBDC consultant Mary Graff. Hoich has high praise for their efforts and recommends their services to small businesses who want to expand their markets. Small businesses are reluctant to seek government contracts, he says, because "people don't know how to do it and are afraid to do it." Working with NBDC, he says, "helps people overcome their fear, and that's 90 percent of it."

NBDC helped Hoich transition his original grounds maintenance business to three long-time managers. The three managers, Kirby Clarke, John Gappa and Mark Herring, each took small business management workshops at NBDC's EntrepreneurShop in preparation for the transfer. A business plan developed in the workshops helped them secure financing from Gateway Bank. Liberty Grounds Maintenance is now a separate company from Hoich's enterprises, although the new owners consult with Hoich regularly. Continuing relationships are important to him. All three owners, he notes proudly, are Westside High School graduates, and Kirby Clarke has been a friend since kindergarten.

Commitment to the local economy is another value Hoich maintains through his government grounds contacts. He is adamant about buying equipment locally, joining the local chamber of commerce and hiring local people. Mark Morgan, president of U.S. Grounds, travels regularly to each site and keeps Hoich informed via email and digital pictures. Hoich himself visits each site quarterly. He remains deeply involved in his business and enthusiastic about its quality of service.



He is also enthusiastic about the quality of service provided to small businesses by the Nebraska Business Development Center.

Hoich knows from experience that business success is hard work. He uses an analogy about squeezing an apple for its juice. The question is, he says, "is the squeeze worth the juice?"

According to Hoich, "For the right people, it is, and NBDC is about getting the right people to get their business going."



From L to R: Mike Hall, NBDC procurement assistance consultant; Scott Knapp, NBDC procurement assistance consultant, counseling two conference attendees; Amy Salmen-Thomas, NBDC consultant at Wayne State College; Bruce Reicher, chief of staff to Congressman Tom Osborne.

## Conference targets rural business owners

The fourth in the 2005 series of conferences hosted by The Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) for rural business owners addressed the issues of business expansion and transition planning. The fall Nebraska Business Development Conference met at Central Community College in Columbus on October 17. Opening with an address by Bruce Reiker, chief of staff for Congressman Tom Osborne, the event offered educational sessions and opportunities to touch base with government contracting agencies.

In his opening remarks, Reiker emphasized the growth potential of rural Nebraska businesses particularly in the market for energy.

NBDC procurement technical assistance consultants Mike Hall and Mary Graff, Omaha center; Scott Knapp, Kearney center; and Amy Salmen-Thomas, Wayne center presented sessions in government contracting issues. The consultants focused their presentations on helping rural businesses acquire the information to successfully bid.

"Rural businesses can compete with metropolitan businesses for contracts if they know the ins and outs," Hall says, "and that's the goal of these conferences, to give them the resources and contact with agencies that they need."

In the closing address by Dedrick Gill of QA3

Financial Advisors, business owners were counseled about the importance of planning ahead for retirement and business succession. According to Gill, many small businesses run their operations for many years without a plan and when the time comes to close, many have nothing to show for their accomplishments.

Other sponsors in attendance included Loup Power District, Nebraska Rural Initiative, and the Nebraska Economic Development Corporation. Conferences for the 2006 series are being planned.



Professor Anne York came to UNO from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill with experience in Seattle and North Carolina's Research Triangle. She teaches graduate and undergraduate level entrepreneurship courses.

## the YOUNG and ENTREPRENEURIAL

CBA program mentors a new generation of Nebraska business owners

Looking back on the first Maverick Entrepreneurship Institute, all parties involved can't help but claim the seven-week summer program for local high school seniors was a success. Anne York, a UNO business professor and the program's director, says the plan for next year is to increase the number of participants from 16 to 45 and to open enrollment to rural students across the state.

The Maverick Entrepreneurship Institute was created to promote entrepreneurial thinking among high school and college students interested in starting businesses in Nebraska. Student participants, mostly African American, Hispanic or Asian, were nominated by high school teachers and counselors from the Omaha, Westside, and Bellevue school districts. Nine male and seven female students worked in teams of two to five members.

The first week of the seven-week program was devoted to classroom work in which students learned about business plans and marketing. They were taught how to implement a project from conception through execution. Students conducted research at the library, online, and onsite at a local go-kart track. Business plans included cash flow forecasts, budgets, and surveys. Besides the technical aspects of the business plan and research, students learned presentation skills, teamwork, and business behaviors.

Field trips included visits to New Community Development Center in North Omaha, the Juan Diego Center in South Omaha, First National Bank Tower, Papio Fun Park, Bemis Center, the UNO HPER Building, the UNO Milo Bail Student Center, the Peter Kiewit Institute, and UNO residence halls.



A public art project sponsored by the Bemis Center illustrates the Maverick team's presentation. The 30'x60' banner created by young artists from Omaha high schools was installed at the Quest Center.



### SPONSORS

First National Bank was the lead sponsor. Team projects were supported by Cargill, William Kizer family foundation, Jim Krieger family foundation, Jack Koraleski, Larry Larson, and Bob Stedman.

Speakers included Nicole Jesse (La Casa Pizzeria), Michael Brown (UNO BSBA), John Buckley (UNO MBA), UNO Student Enrollment Services, UNO's Project Achieve, Joyce Cooper (InRoads Program) Pablo Zatzabal (Great Plains Minority Supplier Development Council), Gwen Easter (Safe Haven Child Care), Lillian Bell (Bell House of Designs), Curtis Love (Computer Works, Inc.), Ignacio Chavez (El Alamo), Joseph Ramirez (attorney), Margaret Smith (Papio Fun Park), Todd Simon (Omaha Steaks), Howie Halperin and Becky Dorn (WELCOM), David Herbster (UNO Athletics), and Laura Dickson (UNO Library).

This opportunity to network and work as teams also gave the students a chance to experience college life. York said education is important for business success and is the one thing many entrepreneurs regret not pursuing. She said research shows that, for women and minority entrepreneurs, education is especially critical.

Projects (see sidebar) were conducted in an almost-professional environment. Students were given offices, phones, computers, and business cards, and conducted their business in a Roskens Hall suite. For the final activity, each team presented their findings in front of an audience of board members, family, friends, mentors, and sponsors. At the end of the program 13 students met the criteria for three hours of college credit and all 16 received a \$1,900 consulting fee.

York said, "We are confident that our efforts this summer have made a difference in these students' lives and potential, and look forward to following their careers over the next few years."

For more information on the Maverick Entrepreneurship Institute visit the web at <http://cba.unomaha.edu/mei/>

**GRAND PRIZE** in the the project competition went to the team tasked with developing a value-added corn gluten product for Cargill. The project team suggested a protein supplement for dogs in the form of a treat to be named Doggy-Tein. The assignment included researching the competition.



**Agenda**

- What is the Bemis Center?
- What is the Bemis Underground?
- Our Task
- Our Procedure

**Work Allocations**

- Courtney - Surveyor, Leader Of North Omaha Group, Typed Client List, PowerPoint, Final Paper
- O'Neal - Survey Transcriber, Typed Client List, and PowerPoint
- Chris - Survey Transcriber, Leader Of South Omaha Group, Final Paper, Surveyor
- Kayla - Survey Transcriber, Typed Client List, organized data, and PowerPoint
- Carmen - Translator, Surveyor, and Contact to Pl...

**Work Allocations Legend:** Courtney, Kayla, Carmen, Chris

**Welcome**  
Wellness Council of the Midlands  
Matthew Shepherd  
Chalis Bristol  
Melissa Haynes

**DOGGY-TEIN Market**

- 60% household have at least 2 pets
- Over 110 million cats and dogs
- Cats and dogs combined produce:
  - 2,500 per hour
  - 420,000 per week
  - 22 million per year
- 400 human beings per hour

### PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Projects included finding a value-added corn gluten product for Cargill, developing a how-to manual to help Bemis Underground artists run shows, helping with a membership-recruitment event for the Wellness Council of the Midlands (WELCOM), conducting a survey of entrepreneurs in North and South Omaha, and creating a for-profit Mavericks athletics web page (mavspedia.com) modeled after the popular huskerpedia site.

# CALENDAR



NOVEMBER

- 3 Lucas Society Dinner and Reception
- 24 Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- 8 CBA National Advisory Board Meeting
- 16 Commencement
- 26 Holiday Break through Jan 2

JANUARY

- 9 Spring Semester Begins
- 13 NBDC Advisory Board
- 16 Martin Luther King Holiday

FEBRUARY

- 1 Burns MBA Leadership Speaker Series
- 7 "Inside CBA"
- 19 Beta Gamma Sigma Founder's Day
- 28 Burns MBA Leadership Speaker Series

MARCH

- 13 Spring Break through Mar 19

APRIL

- 13 CBA Honors and Awards Ceremony
- 14 NBDC Advisory Board

MAY

- 5 Commencement
- 11 CBA Distinguished Alumni Luncheon
- 12 CBA Alumni Golf Scramble and Dinner
- 19 National Advisory Board Meeting

## CBA INNOVATION DAY 2005

On October 27, the *Microsoft Across America* mobile event experience, a 27-foot semi fully loaded with new Microsoft technologies, HP and Cisco products parked at Roskens Hall for the Grand Opening of the Business Innovation Laboratory (BIL). The truck has moved on, but you are invited to visit BIL and see state-of-the-art business technology demonstrated.

**Call ahead to schedule lab demonstration: 402-554-2649.**

*\*The Lab is available when not being used by a class. BIL is in Roskens Hall, Room 402 and maintains a website at <http://cba.unomaha.edu/bil/>.*

### THANK YOU BIL EQUIPMENT SPONSORS!

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