



## **NETForce Meeting**

**Friday, March 1, 2019**

**Informal Networking – 9:00-9:30 a.m. (CST)**

**Meeting – 9:30 a.m. (CST) – 2:30 p.m. (CST)**

**Central Community College-Kearney Center  
Kearney, NE**

***Special Note: The meeting agenda, handouts and meeting minutes are all available online at the NDE Entrepreneurship Education website at <https://www.education.ne.gov/entreped/net-force/>.***

RSVPs Received/Participants: Janelle Anderson Ehrke, Sandra Barrera Fuentes, Charles Beck, Steve Bors, Gregg Christensen, Nancy Flock, Kristi Gargan, Connie Hancock, Aliese Hoffman, Roxann Holliday, Don Hulme, Chad Johnson, Shawn Kaskie, Bradley Keasling, Gene Knapp, Sydney Kobza, April Myers, Dawn Nizzi, Griselda Rendon, Jim Reiff, Darren Robinson, Elizabeth Roetman, Marilyn Schlake, Lisa Tschauner, Dave Behle, Michelle Konen, Sandie Fischer, Dan Mauk, Scott Cole, Savannah Lyon, Jonah Staap, Isaac Mertens.

Zoom Participants RSVPs: Jacie Milius, Lauren Sheridan-Simonsen, Jodi Gehr, Paula Abbott, and Erin Chadwick.

The meeting convened at 9:30 a.m.

Steve Bors called the meeting to order.

Welcome by Steve Bors to the group.

Bradley Keasling, organizer for the meeting to be held at the CCC-Kearney Center, welcomed everyone to the Center.

### **Entrepreneurship and the Central Community College System**

Roxanne Holliday, Central Community College explained her new position. There will be more emphasis on entrepreneurship and her job is to build this on campus and throughout the service area. She is still “getting her feet on the ground.” Doris Lux is assisting her in this. She will be moving to the Entrepreneurship Center.

She invited participants to let her know what CCC could do to be a partner in their efforts. She mentioned an entrepreneurship certificate is being offered through online instruction. She is working on the measurable and noticing widely varying needs.

## **Entrepreneurship Best Practices Summit-2018**

Marilyn Schlake, Chairperson of the EShip Best Practices Summit Planning Committee, shared a report with key information and data.

- There were 110 attendees
- The evaluations were overwhelmingly positive.
- The consensus is that the Summit is starting to have some impact around the state.
- Some evaluations mentioned the need for more networking opportunities (something that is mentioned every year and we have tried to incorporate adequate time and facility space to help this take place).
- 2019 the Summit will return to the Holthus Center in York on October 29<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday).
- Marilyn said there is an open invitation for anyone to join the planning committee.
- Budget items discussed included:
  - The Summit “cash flowed” with \$2,800 in net income.
  - There is approximately \$14,000 in the Summit account from all previous conferences.
- A question was asked about how many entrepreneurs attend. Discussion followed that the Summit does not have entrepreneurs as a primary target audience. It is specifically designed for educators, economic and community developers and service providers. Entrepreneurs are, of course, welcome to attend.
- Lisa Tschauner mentioned the competition at the end of the day that involved students from all the University campuses.
- A suggestion made was to showcase area high school entrepreneur programs. Grand Island could talk about the infusion of entrepreneurship instruction into their academies. Principals could be invited to explain their programs.
- Discussion followed on whether there might be a way to digitally connect from Western Nebraska. Live streaming possibilities were discussed with Striv mentioned as a possible vendor to do this. There could be breakouts at the local level (satellite Summits)

### **Facility Tour**

The group adjourned for a tour of the new facility.

### **Participant Updates**

#### **Kristi Gargan - GrowNebraska**

- Google Livestream will take place next on March 6
- Third Thursday training was noted
- MarkeTECH conference is April 3<sup>rd</sup>. NETForce participants were encouraged to register.

#### **Sandy Fischer-Central Community College**

- Participants were encouraged to reference page 5 in the minutes for their activities and to note all that Doris Lux still does.
- CCC-Columbus works closely with Gene Knapp (SCORE)

#### **Darren Robinson – Buffalo County Economic Development**

- Mentioned they don't do as good a job to focus on entrepreneurship as they would like to be doing

- He mentioned helping with the Big Idea Contest
- He hopes to work with Gallup's Builders Profile 10 and to leverage the Future Builders concept for Buffalo County.

#### **Dawn Nizzi – Westside Community Schools CAPS**

- Dawn focused on describing Westside's CAPS program and student self-awareness
- She talked enthusiastically about the Future Builders Challenge Omaha that will be taking place July 13-15, 2019 and is being hosted by Builder Trend. It will be a 1 ½ day Challenge event.
- The next "challenge" is what needs to come next as a follow-up to the Future Builders Challenge

#### **Marilyn Schlake-University of Nebraska Extension**

- Marilyn handed out flyer on Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference. It will be taking place in Beatrice, April 24-25.
- Registration is now open.
- This conference is a unique format because it is more of a conversational teach and learn conference
- Additional information is available on the flyer.

#### **Steve Bors – Southeast Community College Entrepreneurship Center**

- Steve shared that they are taping their Perk Up Thursday Weekly Coffees and placing them on YouTube
- The Coffee Thursday talks have been a tremendous success and offer a unique networking opportunity for participants.
- They are held at the SCC Entrepreneurship Center at 285 S 68<sup>th</sup> Street Place (3<sup>rd</sup> floor), Lincoln.
- The calendar of future coffees can be accessed at <https://www.southeast.edu/entrepreneurship-center-calendar/>

#### **Shawn Kaskie – Rural Futures Institute**

- RFI is transitioning to a student fellows program
- They would like to grab some of the interns (student fellows) from the Community College system
- The time commitment is 250 hours of service
- One of the best aspects is the training programs for these interns (3-4 day training + mentoring training for mentors)
- There are specific deliverables for the interns
- Criteria for interns: can be any postsecondary student, probably need to be sophomore level
- Shark Tank event will be held in Lincoln April 5<sup>th</sup> (open enrollment, 2 minute limited pitch)
- Successful pitches will need to have a prototype
- More details can be found at <https://engler.unl.edu/>
- The intent is to lure as many entrepreneurs as possible to the event.

#### **Jim Reiff – Nebraska Enterprise Fund**

- NEF is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year
- Encouraged participation at MarkeTECH
- They are focused on revolving loan fund and have provided 1200 training sessions

### **Steve Bailey - Dawson Public Power**

- Encouraging FFA chapters in their area to get involved in entrepreneurship programs
- Is seeking funding for this; including angel investors
- Goal is to get kids interested in entrepreneurship as kids, then come back to their communities (building Eship culture).

### **Chad Johnson - NPPD**

- NPPD sponsors a traveling MakerSpace (STEM Connections Lab)
- They also sponsor a highly successful Create! Open program (56 competitive robots)
- Nebraska has 500 competitive robots which makes us 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation
- Nebraska's event is the largest event other than national robot competition
- They also host an innovation challenge during the day (reference the Showcase overview handout)
- Next year's event (2019) will be the first Saturday in February

### **Lisa Tschauner – Center for Entrepreneurship and Rural Development**

- CERD has piloted Entrepreneurial Living Learning Community
  - Have created a general studies course with 25 students on entrepreneurship
  - Participants can be any major
  - Must be entrepreneurship minor
  - They are launching a campus T-shirt business
  - A great part of the experience is that the students go on entrepretours
  - They are recruiting for next year (freshman, sophomore students)
- They will be hosting their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Awards Ceremony on April 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Recognizes local entrepreneurs
  - Enactus students will be presenting their national presentation
- The Entrepreneurship class is all online this spring
- The Enactus team has had a hard year but a productive year (took away awards at regional competitions)
- Adulting 101 will be offered by Enactus again.
- New Venture Adventure (NVA) was hosted again last fall
- They also did NVA on the road in Ord and Holdrege (NVA 2.0 concept)
- A high school camp will be held the end of May
- BizKids and BizKids 2.0 continue
- Enactus students will be producing an issue of Open for Business

### **April Myers – Nebraska Enterprise Fund**

- NEF is hosting a construction workshop in Grand Island
- Working on business transition

## **Sydney Kobza**

- Sydney works with business, marketing and management teachers across the state Nebraska (Nebraska Department of Education-Education Specialist)
- They just completed their standards revision process and the standards were unanimously approved by the State Board of Education
- She has done a tremendous job promoting attendance at the Summit by teachers
- She is also the FBLA State Advisor and was interim DECA Advisor
  - FBLA is April 4-6 in Omaha; also look for presenters for FLCs
  - DECA is March 14 and 15 in Lincoln
  - FBLA will be moving its State Leadership Conference to Kearney from Omaha after 40 years in the same location

## **Panel of Entrepreneurs – Working Lunch**

### **Jonah Staap-21 years old from Kearney**

- Graduated 2015 from Kearney High School
- The problem he wanted to solve--to make a skateboard wheel that moves in any directions
- Called Sidewinder wheels; developed prototypes in high school
- Marketed the concept in Los Angeles
- Worked with Midland Molding in Kearney for production
- Did a Kickstarter campaign for funding
  - Had 80,000 people, but only raised \$2,500
- Discovered that manufacturing was very expensive; would have cost \$500,000
- He has now moved to selling products on Amazon to meet unmet needs
- Qualitech is his brand name (trademarked); done through Amazon FEA
- Product selling now is a grill basket

### **Isaac Mertens – Brandon Built**

- Isaac is co-owner of Brandon Built, an industrial furniture manufacturer
- Sells on Etsy
- Specializes in pipe and wood furniture
- Markets worldwide
- He now has 5 employees
- The business started in a garage
- 100% of profits go back to Kearney Public Schools
- He has also started FLUX – fitness apparel brand and fitness protocol app
- Participated in BIG Idea but did not win
- Big Idea taught them that not winning was the need to put in their own blood, sweat and tears into the business

### **Savannah Lyon – FosterCare App**

- Savannah is an MBA student
- She works at Compass, a foster care agency, and has foster son
- She saw the need for a better way to submit reports
- A friend really pushed her to compete in Big Idea event
- She said it was invigorating to see the other presenters (middle school, high school, college, community)

- She finished in the top 3 and won the competition
- She has used the Marketing Research class to focus her product feasibility research
- She is currently working on her business plan
- Key takeaways:
  - Relationships are vital.
  - Pivoting was biggest ah-ha
  - The dedication it takes and how to lose and how to win (trial and error)
  - They need ways to network and to have mentors

### **Derek Rusher – President of the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce**

- The Chamber’s guiding proposition statement is Helping Business Succeed
- They are the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest chamber in state of Nebraska (850 members)
- Added 83 new members in 2018
- There are 13 Board of Directors members
- The Chamber has 8 staff members
- They also have 2 high school interns
- By the numbers:
  - One of 5 accredited chambers in Nebraska
  - 11 Chamber affiliations
  - 10 Chamber committees
  - 1 Newest committee is digital marketing club
  - \$158,850 Buffalo Bucks issued (used to keep \$ in Kearney)
  - 4,605 social media
  - 46,635,940 – Impressions on social media in 2018
  - 100 – celebrated 100<sup>th</sup> annual meeting (started Commerce Club in 1908)
  - Unveiled two 2 logos
  - 62 Young Professionals Network members (ages 21-40)
  - 3100 students impacted by 130 volunteers in Junior Achievement
  - 450 & 20 (450 students from 20 diff schools went to Career Exploration Day)
  - NEXT – 13 young individuals (college students) who are learning more about Kearney and developing leadership skills
- The 2019 theme is Adding Value
- A new event is “Celebrate Kearney), April 22-26<sup>th</sup>
- STAY (Shop Taste Adventure your Kearney) – reasons for shopping locally

### **Participant Updates (Continued)**

#### **Connie Hancock & Shawn Kaskie – Nebraska SourceLink**

- SourceLink is a Nebraska Entrepreneurship Initiative
- Our help is needed to help test the prototype
- They have sample contract draft (Gregg will ask for this)
- It was noted that **everyone** needs to be on the same page for “warm handoff”
- The goal is to get full funding by July of this year
- It is part of Blueprint Nebraska’s potential program of work
- Iowa and Kansas SourceLink has developed a road map for stages of entrepreneurship

**Dan Shundoff – Blueprint Nebraska** <https://blueprint-nebraska.org/>

- Dan is the owner of Intellicom
- Works with 450 businesses
- He also does some of their research around BP 10
- Dan is on the steering committee for Blueprint Nebraska
- Blueprint Nebraska has established 16 Industry Councils charged with digging deep into their respective areas.
- It is a collaboration of business leaders and subject matter experts
- Each council will offer recommendations to the Steering Committee regarding the needs, opportunities and long-term growth potential of their respective fields.
- When the report comes out it will focus on key priorities for ACTION that converts concepts and strategies into DOING something!
- It will look less like policy and more like to do lists
- They know they have to make a compelling case that drives action!

**Aliese Hoffman – UNK Center for Entrepreneurship and Rural Development**

- BizKidz Camp will be held June 10-13 for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Go for Launch will be 3 days 2 nights on campus for high school students
  - Hosted at UNK for entrepreneurially minded high school students.
  - Participants will experience business development and ownership by learning from seasoned entrepreneurs and business professionals.
  - They will work together to innovatively solve a business challenge in a supportive and experiential learning environment.
  - Students attending will receive a certificate of completion from UNK.
  - The program includes all food and materials.
  - Participants must apply by the application deadline. Registration fee is \$200 if paid by April 1, \$250 if paid by May 1, and \$300 after May 2.

For questions, call 308.865.8199 or email Aliese at [hoffmanal2@unk.edu](mailto:hoffmanal2@unk.edu)

**Chuck Beck – Nebraska Business Development Center (UNK)**

- Chuck is the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Consultant for Central and Western Nebraska
- He helps help companies take advantage of contracts with government agencies
- They are 6 months into a grant
- For more information: <https://www.unomaha.edu/nebraska-business-development-center/government-contracting/index.php>
- Their Calendar of Events can be accessed at <https://nbdcenterdirect.com/events?reset=1>

**Sandra Barrera Fuentes – UNL Extension**

- Provides Spanish mentoring including one on one technical support
- Develop workshops; sessions were conducted in Grand Island in partnership with REAP
  - Cleaning Academy: 14 women with cleaning businesses participated and obtained certification
  - Construction Academy: 47 participants

- Other activities include Business Tours, Coffee Table Meetings, Social Media Facebook Groups, and Awards and Recognition

#### **Griselda Rendon –REAP Center for Rural Affairs**

- She is working with GI Career Academies
- They are sponsoring speakers
- She shared a calendar of workshops
- They will try to reach beyond Grand Island

#### **Gene Knapp – SCORE**

- SCORE is non-profit resource for entrepreneurs
- There are 130 members in Nebraska
- Provides free business mentoring services to prospective and established small business owners
- All volunteers are active and retired business executives and entrepreneurs

#### **New Business**

- The next meeting (Spring meeting) will be April 12th at Motorsports Park in Hastings, 427 S Showboat Blvd, Hastings, NE 68901
- Effective July 1 NETForce will need new chair elect with the commitment starting July 2019. Marilyn Schlake was willing to put her name forward. April Myers was proposed as Secretary and she said yes. By show of hands they were elected.

Steve thanked everyone who came. Everyone was urged to attend the next meeting and recruit new participants

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

**Respectfully submitted**

Gregg Christensen, Secretary