

# STATEHOUSE OBSERVER



A Publication by the Department of Administrative Services - State Personnel Division

Administrative Services

Volume 35 Issue 8

## Employee Suggestion System Improves Efficiencies

### *A Letter from the Director:*

It is hard to pick up a newspaper or turn on the news without a reminder of the current status of the national economy. With the rising cost of transportation, services, and consumer goods, we are all experiencing a pinch in the pocket book.

The current economic situation also has an impact on State Government. As State employees, we want to ensure that Nebraska state tax dollars are being used in the most efficient manner to support the highest quality of service in every agency. It is important for us to review our current process and find efficiencies in State Government.

Already, many State agencies have reviewed processes in order to gain cost savings and efficiencies; however, as leaders we know that some of the best cost saving suggestions come from our employees.

Is there an opportunity to create cost savings through greater efficiencies in your agency? The employee suggestion program provides you the opportunity to have a direct impact on State Government economically and through more efficient services.

### **What is a Suggestion?**

A suggestion is a proposal by one or more eligible employees, which will reduce or eliminate State expenditures or improve the operation of State Government. To qualify for consideration, a suggestion must do more than call attention to a problem; it also must set forth a constructive solution. The idea must be practical, efficient, and provide monetary savings to the State.

### **How Do I Submit A Suggestion?**

You can either complete the online version of the Employee Suggestion System form at: <http://www.wrk4neb.org/idea/> or complete a paper version

which is available in your agency's personnel office or from AS – State Personnel. You must complete the Employee Suggestion System form in order for your suggestion to be eligible for consideration.

### **Your Award**

You may receive an award of up to 10% of the first year's dollar cost savings or benefits resulting from the adoption of your suggestion. The maximum award amount is \$6,000 unless a larger award is recommended by resolution of the Legislature.

For more information on the Employee Suggestion System or to complete a suggestion form, please visit <http://www.wrk4neb.org/idea/>.

Sincerely,

Carlos Castillo Jr, Director  
Administrative Services

## Come join the State of Nebraska in the American Heart

### Walk and Community Wide Health Fair!

Sponsored by Administrative Services



When: Saturday, May 17th  
Where: Lincoln East High School  
Time: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

To sign up or for more information please  
contact Stacey Dvorak at 471-4112 or  
[stacey.dvorak@nebraska.gov](mailto:stacey.dvorak@nebraska.gov)

*\*Participation is Voluntary...Participants are encouraged by not required to help raise donations*

# 4th Annual Chief Standing Bear State Commemoration Celebration

Article Written by Zachary Meyer, Public Information Specialist, Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs

2008 marks the 100th anniversary of Ponca Chief Standing Bear as well as the 4th annual Chief Standing Bear State Commemoration Celebration in the State Capitol Rotunda and the 3rd annual Chief Standing Bear Breakfast at Embassy Suites in downtown Lincoln. This year's theme, "Through Our Eyes," is intended to address Native American images and stereotypes in today's media and their impact on our society.

A crowd of 500 is once again expected for this year's Chief Standing Breakfast on Friday, May 9, 2008. Doors will open at 7:00 a.m. at Embassy Suites in Lincoln and the program will begin at 7:30 a.m. and conclude by 8:30 a.m.

This year's keynote speaker is J. Michael Hemmer, Senior Vice President-Law and General Counsel of Union Pacific Corporation and Union Pacific Railroad. In addition to Mr. Hemmer, Congressman Jeff Fortenberry and Mayor Chris Beutler will each make remarks and presentations. Scholarships will be presented to four Native American students at the Breakfast for the second straight year.

Nebraska author and personality Roger Welsch and his wife Linda will receive this year's Chief Standing Bear Humanitarian Award at the State Commemoration Celebration from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday, May 9. In addition to the Humanitarian Award, the Indigenous Roots Teacher Education Program from the University of Nebraska and the Genoa Indian School Foundation will each receive a Chief Standing Bear Organizational Award.



**Save The Date!**

**Friday, May 9, 2008**

**Chief Standing Bear  
"Equality Before the Law" Celebrations**

**3rd Annual Breakfast**  
7:00am - 8:30am Embassy Suites, Lincoln

**4th Annual Commemoration**  
11:45am - 1:00pm Rotunda, State Capitol Building

For more information, please contact  
the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs  
at 402.471.3475 or [zachary.meyer@ncia.ne.gov](mailto:zachary.meyer@ncia.ne.gov).

Alvin Warren, Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department under Governor Bill Richardson, will be the keynote speaker at the Commemoration.

This year's Commemoration will also feature the four 4th and 5th grade winners of the Chief Standing Bear Essay Contest, which will be under corporate sponsorship this year for the first time through McDonald's.

The noon Commemoration will also feature the Omaha Nation Junior-Senior High Concert Band from Macy under

the direction of Mr. John Mangan, as well as hoop dancer Lewis Cass St. Cyr of Winnebago, who was a recipient of last year's Chief Standing Bear Scholarship.

A luncheon will follow the Commemoration at the Ponca Tribal Office at 17th & E Streets, just a few blocks from the State Capitol Building.

Please plan to attend all these exciting events and contact the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs at 402-471-3475 for more information.

# NMA Strengthens Leadership Skills for State Employees

Article Written by Janis Heim, Personnel Selection Analyst, Administrative Services - State Personnel

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, do more, and become more, you are a leader,"

—John Quincy Adams.



Are you a leader? Would you like to be one? If you are a permanent State employee with supervisory, managerial, or decision-making responsibilities on behalf of your agency or an interest in developing leadership abilities, NMA—the Leadership Development Organization has a place for you. You can network with like-minded people and help break down the silos in and between State agencies while you develop your leadership skills or encourage others to develop theirs. If you are looking for affordable training or have skills and abilities you want to share, NMA can help.

This year the Nebraska State Government Chapter of NMA is having membership sales in June, October, and December where we waive the usual \$25 initiation fee. NMA already has the bargain price among national organizations at \$90 a year, \$7.50 a month, or \$3.75 through biweekly payroll deduction.

As an NMA member, you will have access to leadership training at the local, regional, and national levels, at the level of involvement you choose. You can:

- passively read the online newsletters,
- attend the local yearly Expo and pick up some free training,
- attend the monthly local program and enjoy a meal and educational program with your peers,
- sign up and take the local or online training courses provided,
- join a committee and help the local organization,

- chair a local committee and develop your organizational skills,
- run for a local office and develop your leadership skills,
- attend a local regional or national regional leadership development conference and receive the best training the sponsoring chapter or council can find,
- serve on the regional council and hone your administrative skills,
- attend the national conference and receive some of the best training in the country,
- serve on the national committee and work with leaders from all over the United States, or
- run for national office and be recognized as one of the top leaders in the country.

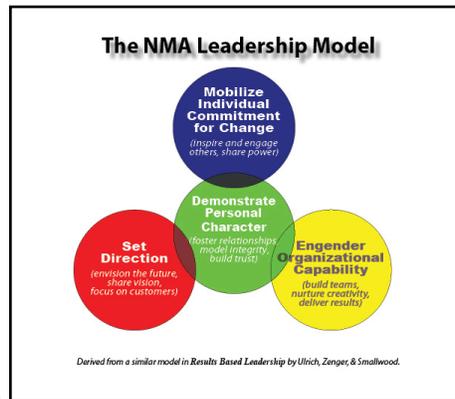
If you are a director, administrator, manager, or supervisor looking to cut costs and foster interagency cooperation, do not overlook the readily available and fully funded managerial, supervisory, and leadership training available from the State Government Chapter of NMA, whose membership cuts across all agencies and areas of Nebraska State Government. By

joining NMA and allowing or encouraging the leaders and future leaders among your employees to join NMA, you gain access to the ongoing leadership training programs, both in person and online; sponsored and chosen by America's richest corporations, including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and other aerospace and engineering firms, and associate with leaders and rising stars from America's most successful companies and most progressive communities.

NMA—The Leadership Development

Organization grew from groups of engineering foremen who met in the nineteen-teens and 1920s to discuss the difficulties of moving from the technical positions where they had succeeded to the touchy-feely world of management and supervision. These pioneering foremen, who may have been surprised to find women joining their ranks, used their engineering skills to design an organization that provided the support and training a person new to interpersonal cooperation and leadership would need. Smaller firms joined with other corporations and entities to form community chapters in addition to the company chapters, while consolidation among engineering firms led ever larger companies to form chapters by workplace and location.

In 1984, the State of Nebraska decided that NMA, which had leadership training and development as its sole agenda, was the perfect organization to fit with its in-house management training and certification program, and formed the first state government chapter. Over the years, the Governors and agency heads among our members have sponsored and encouraged membership among their subordinates and recognized and supported their accomplishments.



NMA is a leadership organization run by its members, with shared help and guidance available at every step. If you are looking for a place in State Government to hone your leadership skills or enhance those of others; develop friends, acquaintances, and contacts among today's State agency directors, managers, supervisors and those of tomorrow; or put your vision of good management into practice in a neutral environment, NMA is the organization for you.

# Patients Urged to Follow Prescribed Treatment for Long-Term Medications

Article has been written and provided by Walgreens Health Initiative.



It's your doctor's job to diagnose and provide a recommended treatment plan that usually includes a prescription with specific directions.

It's then up to you to follow through with the prescribed treatment plan. One of the most common problems that can be detrimental to the patient is not taking the medication for the full length of treatment.

Many patients stop taking their medication as soon as they start feeling better. But that's not a good idea. The doctor has given a prescribed dosage for a reason. So patients should ask their doctor before they stop taking prescribed medication.

This often occurs when patients are taking long-term medications, which are referred to as maintenance medications. They are used to treat conditions such as asthma, depression, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol. Stopping your medication too early can make it more difficult to treat such chronic health conditions. In addition, for acute (short-term) conditions, such as an infection, patients should finish the full course of antibiotics. If not, the infection could return, or they could develop an antibiotic-resistant strain of bacteria. This can happen if treatment is stopped too soon, because bacteria may survive and re-infect.

**Emphasizing Medication Adherence**  
Medication adherence refers to patients both agreeing to and then undergoing some part of their treatment program as advised by their doctor or other healthcare provider. Most commonly, it refers to whether patients take their medication. Patients may or may not accurately report back to their healthcare provider whether they have been persistent in taking the medication for the full length of the prescribed treatment.

Non-adherence is more likely if the patient experiences troublesome side effects, has concerns for the long-term effects of their treatment, or if the medication must be taken for a protracted period. It may also be due to the high out-of-pocket cost of the medication or a complex dosing regimen. In some long-term treatments, the medication merely stabilizes a condition rather than relieves symptoms.

Not completing the course of the medication may result in an incomplete cure and a risk of relapse. There could be side effects that may be mild or potentially fatal. In a study in the Archives of Internal Medicine, of more than 1,500 people who had a heart attack, researchers found that one out of eight had discontinued taking their life-saving medications, such as aspirin, beta blockers (high blood pressure), and statins (cholesterol), without their doctor's knowledge within one month of leav-

ing the hospital. Patients who stopped taking these medications were three times more likely to die during the next year than patients who stayed on their medications.

**Taking Maintenance Medications**  
Those with a chronic illness like diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol typically don't have any symptoms but require daily maintenance medication.

Most individuals with high blood pressure do not feel any symptoms, but the condition can silently do significant damage to their heart, kidneys, and circulatory system. Untreated or poorly treated high blood pressure can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney damage, erectile dysfunction, and vision loss. Patients taking certain high blood pressure medications may experience severe high blood pressure, if they discontinue the medication abruptly. This is known as rebound hypertension.

For any health condition, taking medications exactly as they are prescribed for the full length of treatment (unless consulting with the physician first), is important in getting well and preventing relapse.

**Is there a person or team in your agency that has made a difference in the area of Affirmative Action or Diversity?**



Nominate them for the

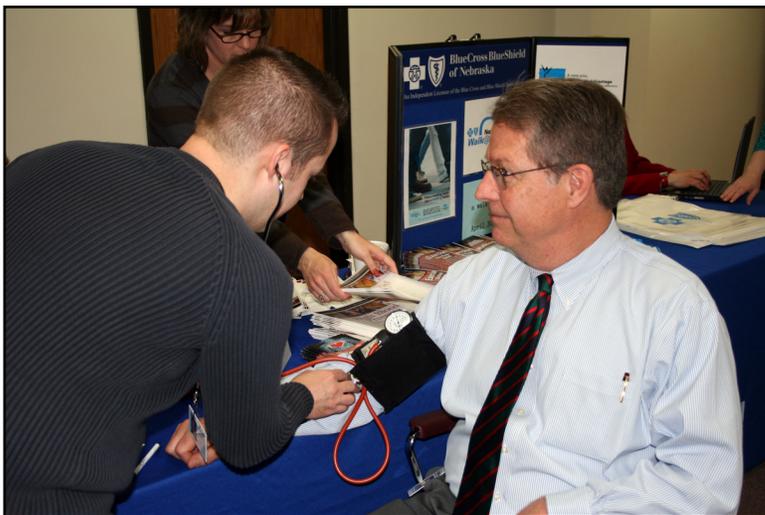
**Governor's Affirmative Action/Diversity Awards**

For more information please visit the State's Affirmative Action Website at:

<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/aa/>  
or contact Charles Roberson at 471-3678  
or [charles.roberson@nebraska.gov](mailto:charles.roberson@nebraska.gov)

## A Healthy You!

# State Employees Participate in Wellness Fair on April 1st



Approximately 800 State employees participated in the “Healthy You!” State Employees Wellness Fair on April 1st. (Pictured Left) Mike McCrory, State Personnel Director, stopped to have his blood pressure checked with one of the exhibitors during the fair. Along with providing free blood pressure screenings, the wellness fair also provided employees an opportunity to visit with several experts in the areas of disease prevention and healthy living.

(Pictured Right) The Lions Club brought their screening trailer and provided free vision and hearing checks to 150 employees during the fair.

Several exhibitors also provided door prizes to the employees who attending the fair including gift cards, exercise videos and equipment, ipod, and cookbooks. Door prize winners were: Joey Brill (DHHS), Lois Champoux (Revenue), Teresa Schuttler (Revenue), Emily Rokusek (DHHS), Jill Krause (DHHS), Jeff Wild (Agriculture), James Oeltjen (DHHS), Jude Eberhardt (DHHS), Claire Covert (DHHS), David Lawton (DHHS), Melissa Mockelman (Revenue), Kathy Korinek (DHHS), Linda Shandera (DHHS), Amy Thompson (DHHS), Larry Starr (Education), and Pat Pittman (DHHS).



The YMCA exhibit received a lot of attention during the fair. (Pictured Left) Dianne Scott, Karen Bentz, and Diane Dirksen, react to test tubes that illustrated how much sugar was in common food and drink including cola, fruit (peaches), fruit drinks, and ice cream. A second set of test tubes illustrated how much fat was in popular foods including chicken breast, french fries, hamburger and double cheeseburger, tacos, hot dogs, and pepperoni pizza.

## Your Gifts at Work!



# Thank you State Employees!

### Did You Know?

*Every minute of every day, a baby is born prematurely. Babies who are born too small, too soon may suffer lifelong health consequences or may die. The annual hospital bill for premature babies exceeds billions of dollars every year.*

Megan was born at 27 weeks. Her heart was not functioning correctly, she could not breathe on her own, she was puffy and swollen with infection, and her tiny head was black and blue. She was in for the fight of her life. Like most medically fragile babies, Megan would take two steps forward and one step back. After a month, her systems began to shut down; she was green and gray and on 100 percent oxygen with maximum ventilator settings. Mighty Megan once again beat



the odds and did recuperate. However, was not able to breathe on her own.

After two months, she was still the smallest and sickest baby in the NICU, but certainly one of the most determined. The heart-rending decision was made to perform a tracheotomy. After nearly four months, Megan went home to a house filled with medical equipment and supplies; live-in nurses helped care for Megan when we went to work and a few nights a week so that we could sleep. She started to thrive. At one year, she was eating on her own, was on minimal oxygen and could make some sounds with a speaking valve.

When she was two, she had major reconstructive surgery. We know that we are truly blessed to have Megan in our lives. We attribute her success to lots of love, prayers, great medical personnel, and the March of Dimes. – Jacque Wallman, Union Bank & Trust

## Calling all State Webmasters!

The Nebraska Webmasters' Group provides news and education for all who manage and maintain our State Government web presence. We coordinate with the State Records Board, Accessibility Work Group, and State Government Council to make policy and guideline recommendations promoting interoperability of Internet and web-related technologies for State Government.

We encourage anyone who helps to maintain a State Government web site to attend our meetings and share your experience with the group. Meeting activities include working to set standards (for cookies, branding, accessibility, etc.), sharing new ideas with each other (such as coding and software tips), showing off our web sites (State employees are our clientele, too), and bringing in speakers on various subjects of interest to the group. Recent meeting topics have included RSS feeds (to broadcast news to the public over the web), Cascading Style Sheets (to separate style from content and display web sites in browser, print and mobile devices), reducing email spam, and Web 2.0 technologies (such as blogging, podcasting, YouTube, and MySpace).

You also may contribute by visiting our web site (<http://www.webmasters.ne.gov/>) and joining our email list-serv. The web site provides news and information about the group (meetings and membership), resources for webmasters (accessibility, design, graphics, markup, code validation services, etc.), as well as all adopted guidelines and standards for State Government web sites.

We look forward to meeting you!

Jamie Lillis  
Chair of the Nebraska Webmasters' Group



The Statehouse Observer is also available online at:  
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/observer/>

The Statehouse Observer is published by the Department of Administrative Services-State Personnel Division

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