



Nebraska Innovation Zone Commission Annual Report

February 16, 2006

The Nebraska Innovation Zone Commission (NIZC) was established August 2005 per LB 546. The nineteen appointed Commissioners, representing three NRD's, the University of Nebraska, Nebraska Community Colleges, Class I and Class II cities, as well as Omaha, Lincoln and six Nebraska counties: Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Saunders, Washington and Lancaster. The Commission held their first meeting October 5, 2005 at Mahoney State Park.

By the second meeting of the Commission, By-Laws were adopted and Ken Svoboda was elected chair with Steve Oltmans serving as vice-chair. The November NIZC meeting was also held in conjunction with the 2nd Annual Governor's Summit for the I-80 Corridor.

Within the first six months, the Commission established several goals including the hiring of an executive director, creating a Mission statement, and developing meeting agenda's that included community presentations from six targeted counties. The Commission designated the first Thursday of the each month for meeting dates. The meetings are held in the evenings to accommodate schedules and encourage public comment.

The Commission gracefully dealt with controversial issues such as LB 1121, which would have appropriated 3 million dollars for an environmental impact study for a dam project along the Platte River. The Commission created a growth study proposal to address all aspects of development along the corridor including economic development, environmental impact, infrastructure needs and coordination for building community consensus along the corridor, which has the potential to engage more than 60 communities.

The Commission is in the process of defining the boundaries of the corridor and bringing stakeholders together.

The Mission statement of the NIZC is, ***"Fostering regional partnerships and promoting economic development opportunities for all communities within the Lincoln/Omaha I-80 corridor."***

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