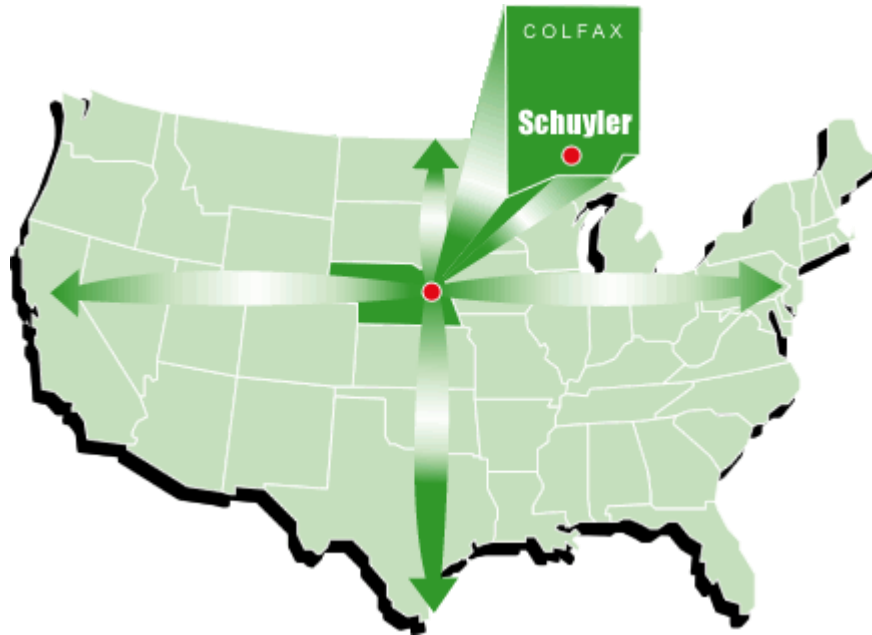


# NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM



## SCHUYLER & COLFAX COUNTY

by

Nebraska Department of Economic Development

November 2007

**NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM  
SCHUYLER & COLFAX COUNTY**

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# **NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM**

## **Schuyler & Colfax County**

### **November 2007**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) surveyors of the Nebraska Business Visitation Program gathered responses from 55 businesses in Colfax County during November 2007.
- 41 respondent businesses were located in Schuyler. Businesses in Howells (6), Clarkson (5), and Leigh (3) were also represented.
- The largest number of respondents was retailers (19); twelve other business categories were also represented.
- Respondent businesses reported a total of 3,004 employees, including full-time, part-time and seasonal employees. The average starting wage reported by respondents was \$11.33 per hour. 36 of the respondents provided paid vacation and 32 provided both paid holidays and health insurance.
- 24 businesses plan to hire 389 new employees within the next year.
- Work force quality and availability are concerns for respondents both now and in the future. 11.6% of respondents stated employee turnover was “high”.
- 28 businesses expect to invest \$8 million in the next three years in physical space, equipment and/or machinery.
- Respondents recognized their businesses faced significant competitive challenges, especially with regard to work force numbers and quality.

## **BACKGROUND**

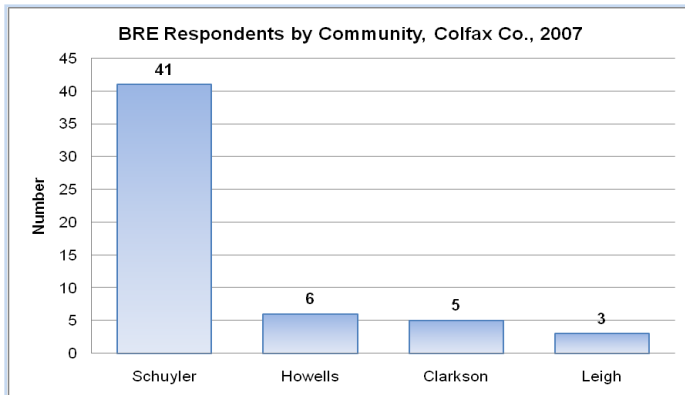
The Nebraska Business Visitation Program engages respondents in face-to-face dialogue to gain an understanding of the characteristics, opportunities, and challenges facing the state's businesses. The state's program began in June 1999. It involves in-person interviews that are coordinated by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED). Interviewers include DED staff, members of the Nebraska Economic Developers Association, the Nebraska Diplomats, and other state and local economic developers. Businesses interviewed may request additional assistance or information. The local economic developer and DED coordinate a timely and customized response based on the needs identified by the business.

## **PROCESS**

In July 2007, the Schuyler Development Company requested DED assistance for a survey of existing businesses. An implementation timeline was developed by late summer (see page 24). From November 12th through November 16th business visitation teams interviewed 55 businesses in Colfax County to survey the local economy's strengths and challenges and to learn more about individual business operations and needs. The tables, graphs and narrative that follow represent the results of those interviews. (Since not all 55 respondents answered every question, the total for each question does not always equal 55.)

Over half of Colfax County's population (10,113) lives in Schuyler; 41 of the respondent businesses (75%) were located there (see Figure 1 & Appendix Tables, pages 21 and 22). Fourteen of the remaining respondents (25%) were distributed among three other Colfax County communities of Howells, Clarkson, and Leigh.

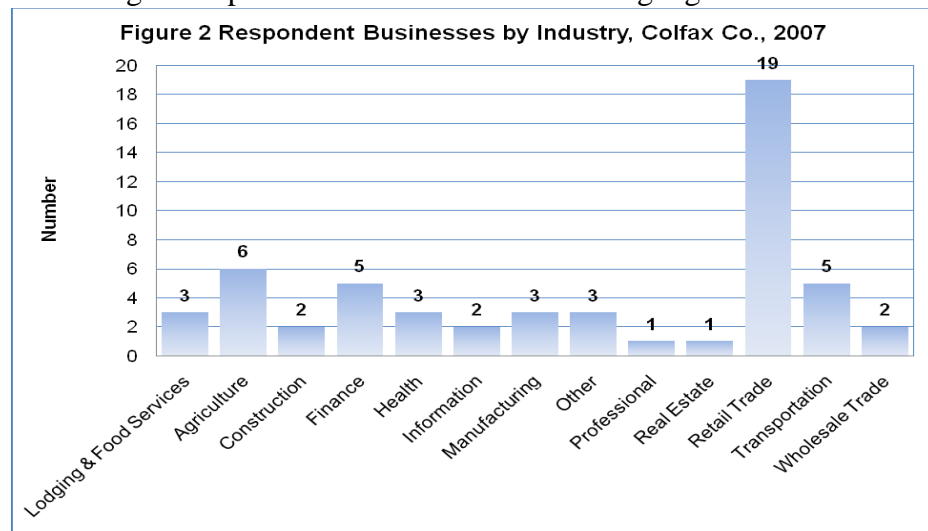
**Figure 1**



The largest number of respondents (19) was from the Retail Trade (see Figure 2). They represented slightly more than a third of all respondents. The U.S. Census Bureau has reported that retailers represented the largest number of businesses by industry in Colfax County in 2005, but that they represented only 20 percent of all employer businesses (see Appendix tables). So, retailers were slightly over-represented in this survey. The next largest number of respondents was in Agriculture (6), Finance (5), and

Transportation (5). The remaining 20 respondents were distributed among eight other industries.

**Figure 2**



Retailers employ a total of 246 (8.2%) of the total 3,004 employees reported by survey participants (see Figure 3). Although there were only three manufacturers included in the survey, they reported about two-thirds of employment (1,991). The total of 1,991 employees reported by the survey’s manufacturing respondents was consistent with Department of Labor numbers (see Appendix tables). Half of the retailers’ employees (123) were part-time compared to one percent of the manufacturers’ employees. Similar to other counties in Nebraska, the health industry had a comparatively large number of employees—259, the second highest total overall.

**Figure 3**  
**Employment by Industry, Colfax Co., 2007**

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Seasonal Full-Time	Seasonal Part Time	Total	%of Total
Lodging & Food	3	4	0	0	7	0.2%
Agriculture	163	65	4	4	236	7.9%
Communications	7	8	0	2	17	0.6%
Construction	9	4	0	3	16	0.5%
Finance	45	7	0	2	54	1.8%
Health	166	80	7	6	259	8.6%
Manufacturing	1,984	7	0	0	1,991	66.3%
Real Estate	2	3	0	0	5	0.2%
Retail	116	123	2	5	246	8.2%
Transportation	135	9	25	3	172	5.7%
Wholesale	1	0	0	0	1	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,631</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3,004</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>87.6%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Twenty-three of the businesses (48%) were Corporations and thirteen were Cooperatives, Partnerships, or LLCs (27%) (See Figures 4 & 5.) The remaining twelve respondents (25%) had organized their businesses as Sole Proprietorships; nine of the sole proprietors (75%) were retailers.



**Figure 5**  
**Business Legal Organization, Colfax Co., 2007**

Legal Organization	Number
S Corporation	14
Sole Proprietor	12
C Corporation	9
Limited Liability	6
Cooperative	4
Partnership	3
Government	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>

(Business Definitions on page 23)

When asked whether they exported only 3 (7%) of the respondents reported doing so. Only 6 (12.8%) sold via the Internet (see Figure 6). Actually, the percentage exporting or selling on the Internet is probably less than the percentages reported in Figure 6. Fifteen percent of the 55 respondents did not respond to the Internet question and 25 percent did not report whether they exported or not.

<b>Figure 6</b>				
<b>Number of Respondents that Export or Sell via the Internet, Colfax Co., 2007</b>				
	<b>Export?</b>		<b>Internet sales?</b>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Yes</b>	3	7.3	6	12.8
<b>No</b>	38	92.7	41	87.2
<b>Total</b>	41	100.0	47	100.0

## **WORK FORCE**

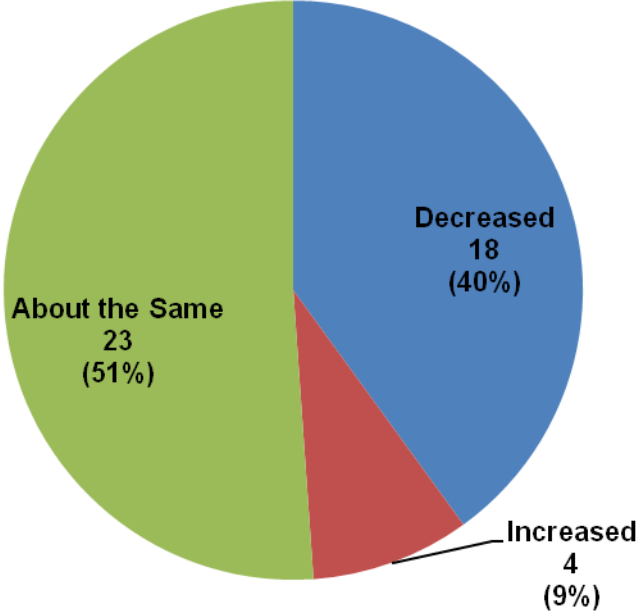
Respondents were asked to evaluate the absentee and turnover rates of their workers (see Figure 7). Thirty-eight businesses (88%) reported that Absenteeism was “Low” or “Moderate” (see Figure 7).

<b>Figure 7</b>				
<b>Reported Absenteeism &amp; Turnover Rates, Colfax Co., 2007</b>				
	<b>Absenteeism</b>		<b>Turnover</b>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
<b>Low</b>	31	81.6%	22	51.2%
<b>Moderate</b>	7	18.4%	16	37.2%
<b>High</b>	0	0.0%	5	11.6%

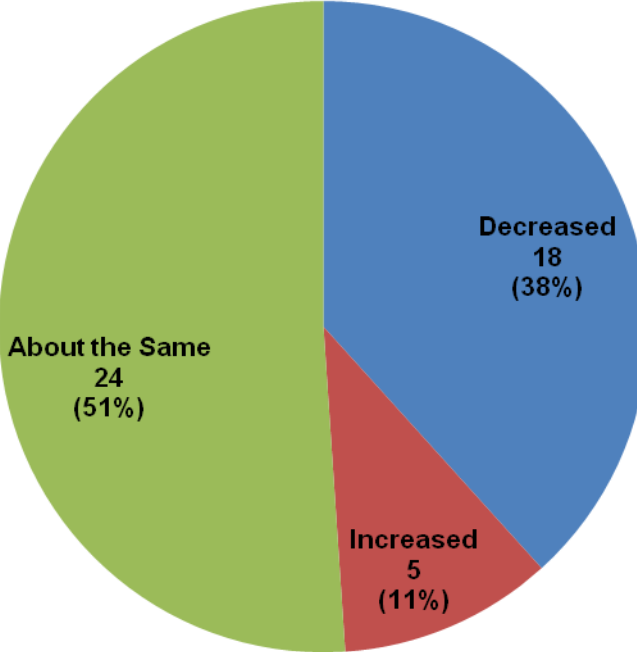
Thirty-eight businesses (88%) reported that Turnover was “Low” or “Moderate.” Five businesses (11.6%) reported “High” Turnover.

Respondents were asked if there had been any changes in the number or quality of job applicants in the last three years. Although 60 percent of respondents said that both the number and quality had stayed the same or increased, almost 40 percent reported that both had decreased (see Figures 8A & 8B).

**Figure 8A**  
**Changes During Last 3 Years in Quality of Applicants,**  
**Colfax County, 2007**



**Figure 8B**  
**Changes During Last 3 Years in the Number of Job Applicants**  
**Colfax County, 2007**



Seventeen of the respondents (38%) reported they had open job positions that had been unfilled for three months or more (see Figure 9). The type of open jobs that were reported unfulfilled included management positions and professional positions as well as technicians, cooks, truck drivers, etc.

<b>Figure 9</b>	
<b>Number and Type of Open Jobs - Colfax Co., 2007</b>	
<b>Have any of your positions been open for 3 months due to a lack of qualified applicants?</b>	
<b>Yes – 17 (38%)</b>	
<b>No – 28 (62%)</b>	
<b>Reported Open Positions:</b>	
Administrative Assistant, Interpreter	
Agronomy Dept. Manager	
Assistant Manager	
Cashier	
Clerk	
Cook	
Dietary & Nursing	
Driver	
Full-time sales person	
Management positions	
Meat Cutter	
Mechanical Technician	
Supervisors, Maintenance and Electricians	
Plumbers and truck drivers	
Secretary	
Technician	
Truck Driver	

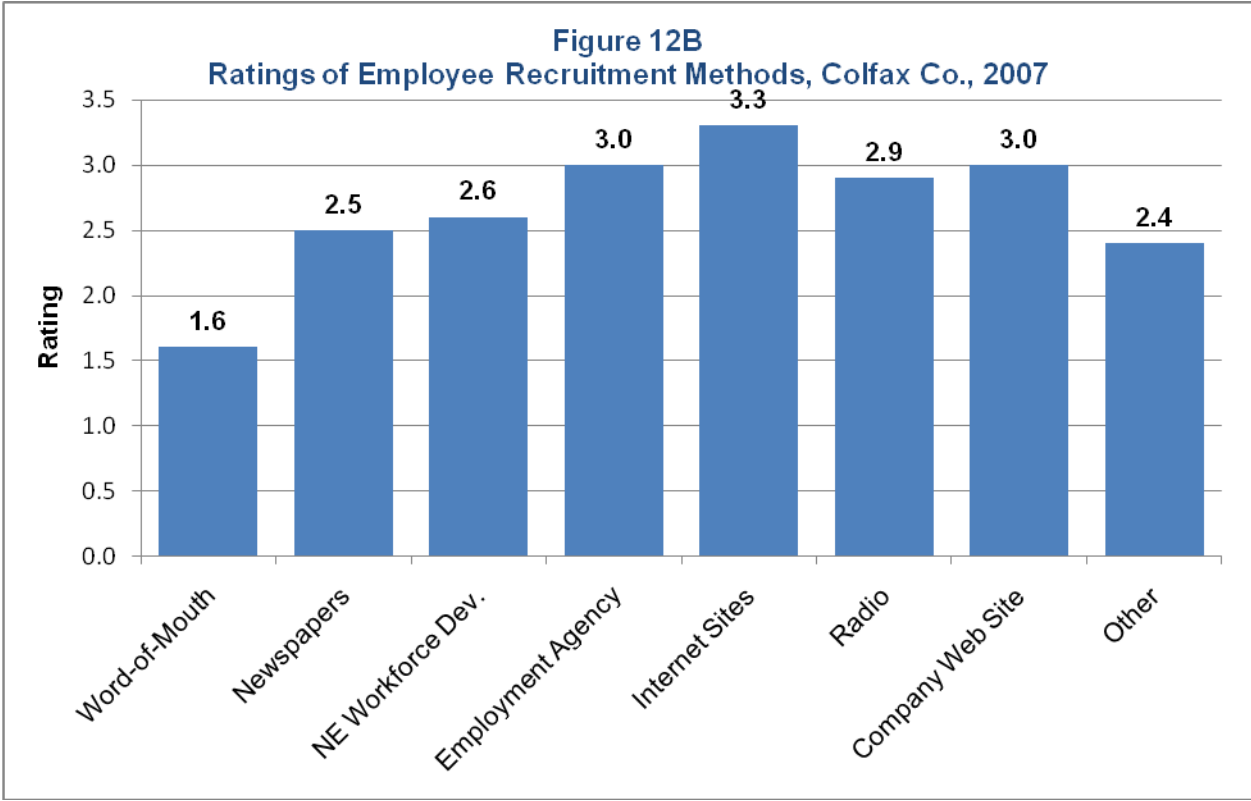
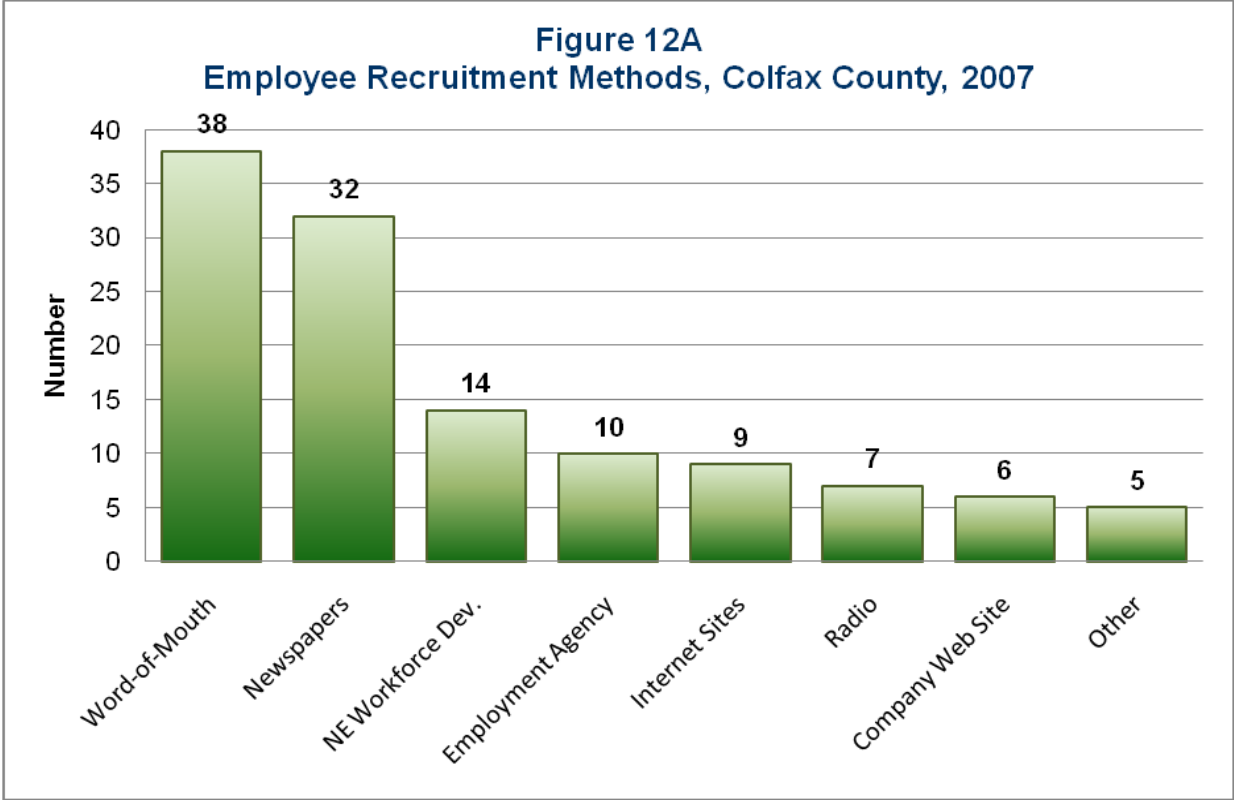
Thirty-nine of respondents (83%) reported providing one or more benefits to employees (see Figure 10). Paid vacation was the most common benefit (92.3%) followed by health insurance (82.1 %) and paid holidays (82.1 %). Eleven respondents (28.2%) reported providing profit sharing/bonus benefits.

<b>Figure 10</b>		
<b>Benefits Provided by Respondent Businesses</b>		
<b>Colfax County - 2007</b>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<b>Benefit Package?</b>	39	8
<i>% of Total</i>	83.0%	17.0%
	<u>No. Providing</u>	<u>% of Total w/ Benefits</u>
<b>Paid Vacation</b>	36	92.3%
<b>Health Insurance</b>	32	82.1%
<b>Paid Holiday</b>	32	82.1%
<b>Retirement</b>	30	76.9%
<b>Life Insurance</b>	21	53.8%
<b>Paid Sick Leave</b>	21	53.8%
<b>Profit/Share Bonus</b>	11	28.2%

Average wages in Colfax County varied widely depending on the industry. The overall weighted average was \$11.33 per hour (see Figure 11). Agricultural industry businesses had the highest average at \$14.16 per hour, followed closely by the health sector at \$14.03. The manufacturing industry average was \$12.09. At \$3.65 per hour, the Lodging & Food sector had the lowest average (many businesses in this sector can legally pay half the federal minimum wage of \$5.85 because “tipping” is assumed to be a significant additional income source).

<b>Figure 11</b> <b>Weighted Average Wages by</b> <b>Industry Colfax County, 2007</b>	
<b>Agriculture</b>	\$14.16
<b>Health</b>	\$14.03
<b>Manufacturing</b>	\$12.09
<b>Construction</b>	\$11.00
<b>Transportation</b>	\$10.39
<b>Retail</b>	\$ 8.55
<b>Communications</b>	\$8.00
<b>Finance</b>	\$7.53
<b>Lodging &amp; Food</b>	\$3.65
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$11.33</b>

The most common method for recruiting new employees are “Word-of-Mouth,” followed by “Newspaper” advertising (see Figures 12A, 12B, & 13).



Rating Scale: 1=Excellent; 2=Good; 3=Fair; 4=Poor

**Figure 13**  
**Employee Recruitment Methods**  
**Colfax County, 2007**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rating</u>
<b>Word of Mouth</b>	38	1.6
<b>Newspapers</b>	32	2.5
<b>NE Workforce Dev.</b>	14	2.6
<b>Employment Agency</b>	10	3.0
<b>Internet Sites</b>	9	3.3
<b>Radio</b>	7	2.9
<b>Company Web Site</b>	6	3.0
<b>Other</b>	5	2.4

Rating Scale: 1=Excellent; 2=Good; 3=Fair; 4=Poor

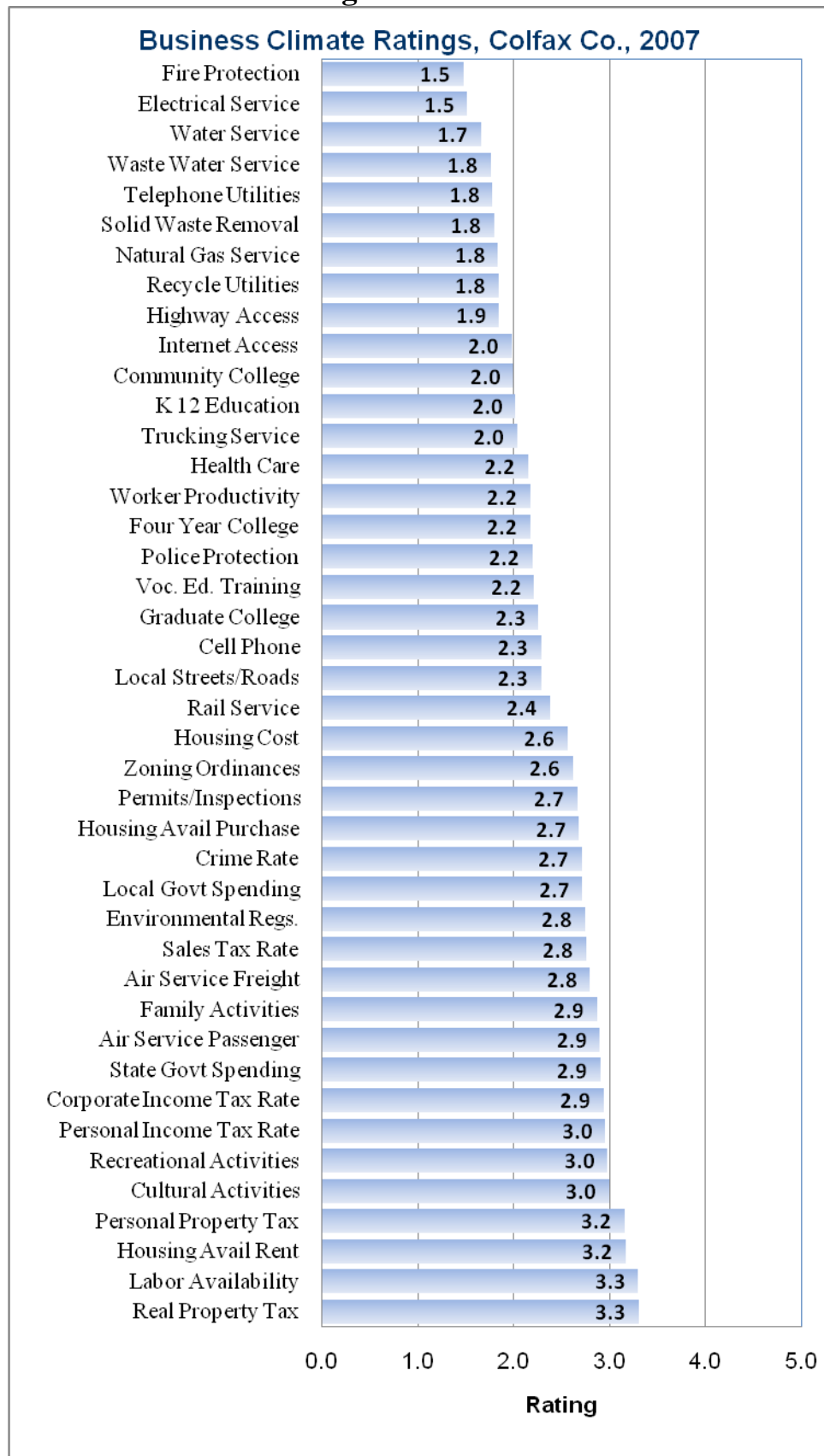
### **BUSINESS CLIMATE**

Ratings for the Business Climate in Colfax County are listed on pages 12 and 13 (see Figures 14 & 15). Forty-two categories were grouped and rated under six separate classifications (Utilities, Transportation, Public Services, Quality of Life, Labor and Government).

“Fire Protection” and “Electrical Service” received the most favorable ratings. Three other classifications rated more favorably than statewide ratings in 2006: Internet Access, Recycle Utility, and Rail Service.

As shown in Figure 15, the availability of “Housing for Rent” and “Labor” were both rated noticeably lower than statewide ratings in 2006. Also “Crime Rate” was rated significantly less favorable than other surveyed counties.

**Figure 14**



**Figure 15 -- Business Climate Ratings, Colfax County, 2007**

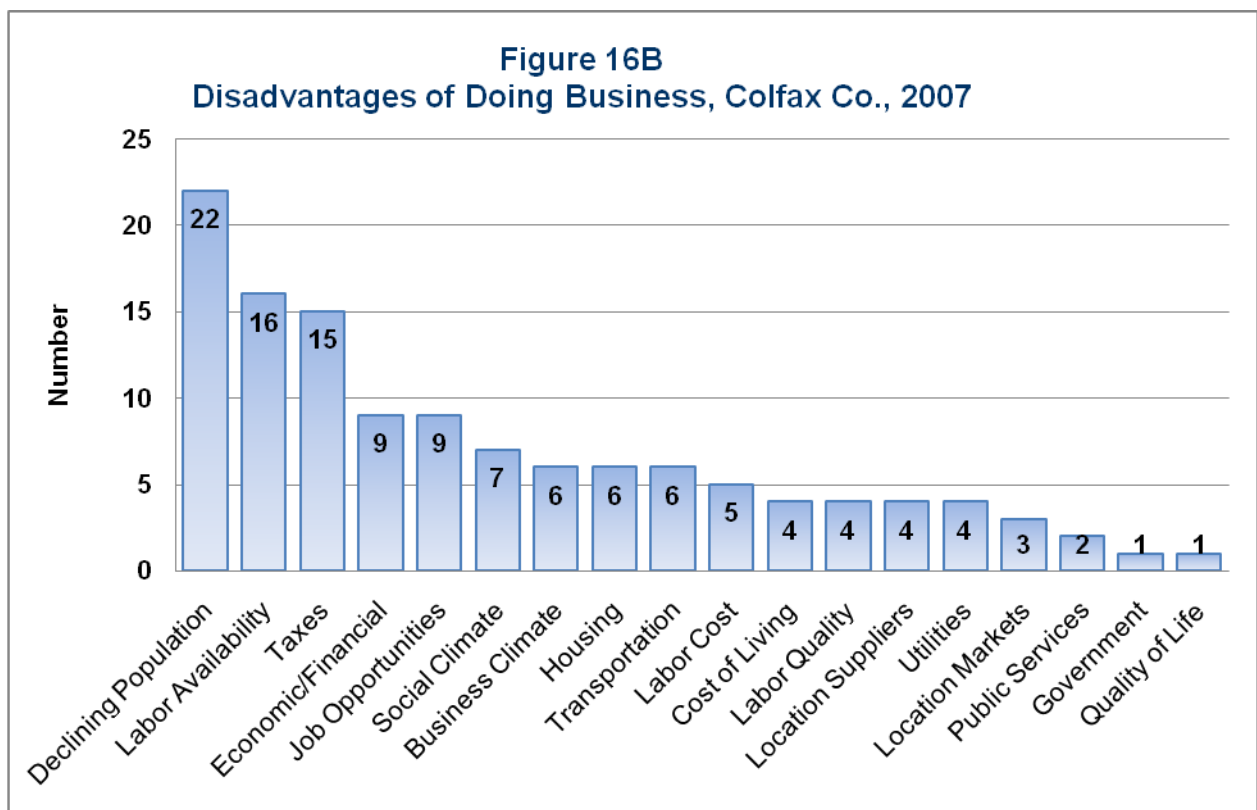
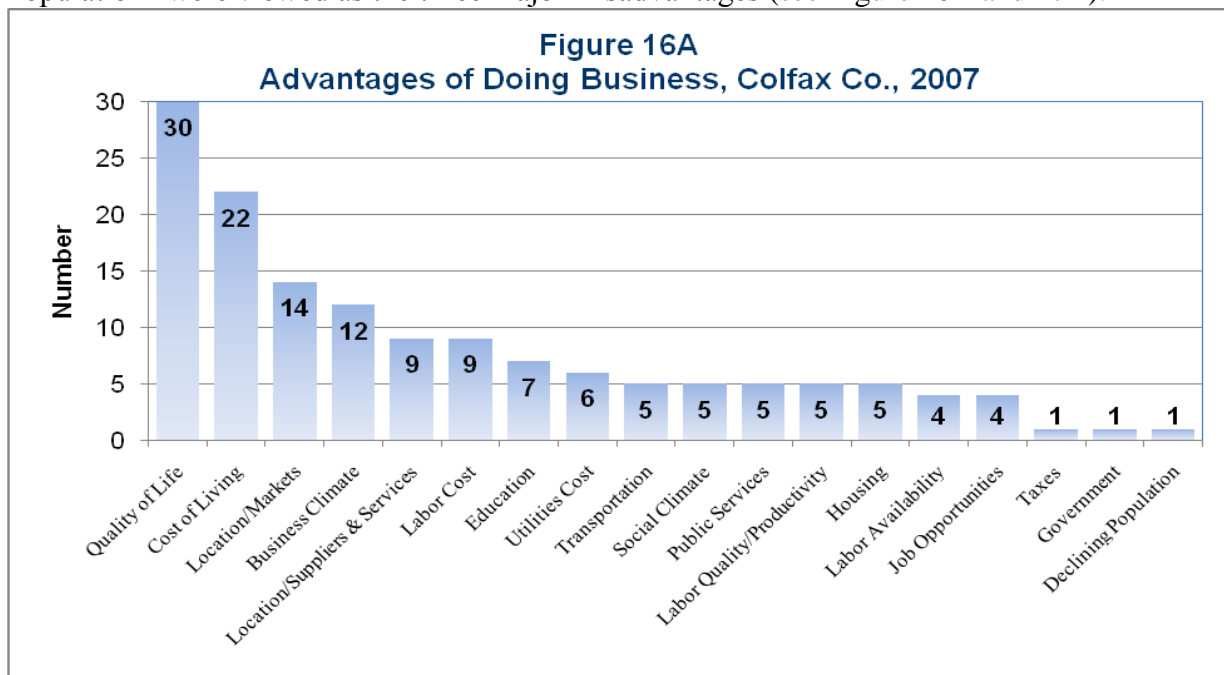
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>2006 State</u>
<b>Utilities</b>			
Cell Phone	45	2.3	NA
Electrical Services	54	1.5	1.5
Internet Access	47	2.0	2.8
Natural Gas Service	37	1.8	1.7
Recycle Utility	45	1.8	2.4
Telephone Utility	55	1.8	2.0
Solid Waste Removal	49	1.8	1.8
Waste Water Service	47	1.8	1.7
Water Service	53	1.7	1.7
<b>Transportation</b>			
Air Service Freight	21	2.8	2.8
Air Service Passenger	21	2.9	2.8
Highway Access	54	1.9	1.8
Local Streets Roads	55	2.3	2.2
Rail Service	21	2.4	2.9
Trucking Service	51	2.0	2.0
<b>Public Services</b>			
Police Protection	55	2.2	1.9
Fire Protection	54	1.5	1.4
K 12 Education	50	2.0	1.6
Community College	37	2.0	2.3
Four Year College	28	2.2	2.0
Graduate College	23	2.3	2.2
Voc. Ed. Training	37	2.2	2.3
<b>Quality of Life</b>			
Crime Rate	49	2.7	1.8
Cultural Activities	53	3.0	2.6
Family Activities	48	2.9	NA
Health Care	53	2.2	1.9
Housing Avail Purchase	54	2.7	2.5
Housing Avail Rent	52	3.2	2.4
Housing Cost	53	2.6	2.7
Recreational Activities	54	3.0	
<b>Labor</b>			
Labor Availability	53	3.3	2.9
Labor Productivity	51	2.2	2.1
<b>Government</b>			
Local Government Spending	50	2.7	2.5
State Government Spending	44	2.9	2.8
Permits Inspections	51	2.7	2.6
Personal Income Tax Rate	50	3.0	3.0
Personal Property Tax	50	3.2	3.1
Real Property Tax	46	3.3	3.2
Corporate Income Tax Rate	34	2.9	2.9
Sales Tax Rate	50	2.8	2.6
Environmental Regulations	44	2.8	2.6
Zoning Ordinances	48	2.6	2.6

Items highlighted in green are classifications which rated significantly better than the statewide rating.

Items highlighted in red are classifications which rated significantly lower than the statewide rating.

Rating Scale: 1=Excellent; 2=Very Good; 3=Fair; 4=Poor; 5=Very Poor

Respondents were asked to list the three major Advantages and Disadvantages of doing business in Colfax County. “Quality of Life”, “Cost of Living” and “Location/Markets” were the top three Advantages (see Figures 16A & 17A). “Taxes”, “Government” and “Declining Population” were viewed as the three major Disadvantages (see Figure 16B and 17B).



Declining Population was rated as the top Disadvantage (see Figure 16B & 17B). For communities located in northern Colfax County (Howells, Clarkson & Leigh), Declining Population is an issue of significance. Schuyler’s population, however, increased by 24% (+1,015) from 1990-2006 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2007).

<b>Figure 17A Advantages of Doing Business in Colfax County, 2007</b>		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Quality of Life	30	20.7
Cost of Living	22	15.2
Location/Markets	14	9.7
Business Climate	12	8.3
Labor Cost	9	6.2
Location Supplier/Services	9	6.2
Education	7	4.8
Utilities Cost	6	4.1
Housing	5	3.4
Labor Quality/Productivity	5	3.4
Public Services	5	3.4
Social Climate	5	3.4
Transportation	5	3.4
Job Opportunities	4	2.8
Labor Availability	4	2.8
Declining Population	1	0.7
Government	1	0.7
Taxes	1	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Figure 17B Disadvantages of Doing Business in Colfax County, 2007</b>		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Declining Population	22	17.7
Labor Availability	16	12.9
Taxes	15	12.1
Economic/Financial	9	7.3
Job Opportunities	9	7.3
Social Climate	7	5.6
Business Climate	6	4.8
Housing	6	4.8
Transportation	6	4.8
Labor Cost	5	4.0
Cost of Living	4	3.2
Labor Quality	4	3.2
Location Suppliers	4	3.2
Utilities	4	3.2
Location Markets	3	2.4
Public Services	2	1.6
Government	1	0.8
Quality of Life	1	0.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>

## **BUSINESS FUTURE**

Respondents were asked several questions regarding their business' future. Regarding the challenges their business faced in the coming year, the most often reported was "Workforce retention/availability" (see Figure 18). That was followed by maintaining their Customer Base, Growth, and Market Competition.

<b>Figure 18</b>		
<b>Challenges Facing Respondent Businesses in Colfax Co., 2007</b>		
	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
<b>Workforce Retention/Availability</b>	10	20.8%
<b>Customer Base</b>	7	14.6%
<b>Growth</b>	7	14.6%
<b>Market Competition</b>	7	14.6%
<b>Population</b>	5	10.4%
<b>Expenses</b>	3	6.3%
<b>Government Regulations</b>	3	6.3%
<b>Survival</b>	3	6.3%
<b>Capital Improvements</b>	1	2.1%
<b>Maintain Local Economy</b>	1	2.1%
<b>Resources</b>	1	2.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

When asked what challenges faced their industry, 22% reported Market Competition, followed by Expenses (17.1%) (see Figure 19). Government Regulations (12.2%) and Growth (12.2%) followed.

<b>Figure 19</b>		
<b>Industry Challenges Facing Respondents in Colfax County, 2007</b>		
	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
<b>Market Competition</b>	9	22.0%
<b>Expenses</b>	7	17.1%
<b>Government Regulations</b>	5	12.2%
<b>Growth</b>	5	12.2%
<b>Customer Base</b>	4	9.8%
<b>Population</b>	2	4.9%
<b>Resources</b>	2	4.9%
<b>Workforce productivity/efficiency</b>	2	4.9%
<b>Workforce retention/availability</b>	2	4.9%
<b>Capital Improvements</b>	1	2.4%
<b>Maintain local economy</b>	1	2.4%
<b>Technology</b>	1	2.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Thirty-one percent of the businesses reported plans to expand their physical space during the coming year and 56 percent planned to make capital investments (see Figure 20). Half of those reporting a planned expansion planned to expand their warehousing facilities. The average size of those planned expansions was 31,556 square feet (however, only 4 respondents provided the size of their planned expansion). A higher number reported they planned capital investments (28 versus 16). The overall total was \$8,029,500 with an average investment of \$573,536.

<b>Figure 20 Business Expansion and Investment Plans in Colfax County, 2007</b>	
<b>Do you plan on expanding?</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	16
<b>No</b>	36
<b>Type of Expansion</b>	
<b>Commercial Space</b>	2
<b>Manufacturing Space</b>	3
<b>Office Space</b>	5
<b>Warehousing</b>	6
<b>Total Square Feet</b>	126,225
<b>Average Square Feet</b>	31,556
<b>Do you plan on capital investment?</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	28
<b>No</b>	22
<b>Total Investment</b>	\$8,029,500
<b>Average</b>	\$573,536

Forty-four percent of the respondents reported they expected to have more employees in a year (see Figure 21). The total increase was reported as 389 additional employees or 12.9 percent more than currently. Both this result and the expansion result reported above suggest that, despite some economic stress, businesses in Colfax County are continuing to invest in plant expansions, equipment, and additional workers.

<b>Figure 21 Additional Employment in One Year Colfax County, 2007</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	24
<b>No</b>	31
<b>Employees to be Added</b>	389
<b>Employees Currently</b>	3,004
<b>% Increase</b>	+12.9

Finally, respondents were asked if they had ever used any state or local tax incentives as part of their business expansions. Only 3 of 36 reported they had. One reported using the LB 775 (the Employment Expansion and Investment Act of 2002 which was amended in 2003 to be the Employment Investment and Growth Act in 2003). This incentive program has subsequently been replaced with the Nebraska Advantage and Nebraska Rural Advantage Act which provide incentives to businesses making investments and creating new jobs in the state. Another business reported receiving assistance from the Federal Small Business Administration and the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority.

# NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM

## Schuyler & Colfax County

### November 2007

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Businesses reported difficulties recruiting new employees and some reported turnover as an issue. These workforce issues may be the result of continued low unemployment rate (2.3 percent). This represents an opportunity to use different recruiting methods for employees. For example, seventeen of the businesses reported having jobs that were open for longer than three months. But only six businesses use a company website to post jobs and only 9 use other internet websites.
2. Using technology to improve employee recruitment strategies could include listing the job openings with the Nebraska Workforce Development office; posting jobs on a community website; partnering with the Applied Information Management Institute through Careerlink  
<http://www.aiminstitute.org/employee-recruitment/careerlink-2.html>.
3. A contributing factor to workforce expansion and retention may be the lack of rental housing. Rental housing in Colfax County was rated significantly lower than other counties in 2006. Statewide rental housing received a 2.4 rating versus the 3.2 rating in Colfax County. (Rating scale was 1=excellent; 2=good; 3=fair; 4=poor; and 5=very poor). Providing opportunities for more affordable housing or using housing incentives to attract employees is another way of addressing workforce issues. Some communities have offered free land if new residents would agree to construct new housing; others offer relocation incentives for recruitment of workers. Seeking out best practices from other communities for resident/employee recruitment could be a community project that benefits the county and the region.
4. Businesses identified increased market competition in their industry and the need to grow their business/customer base. With only seven businesses using the internet for sales there could be an opportunity to market beyond the current geographic area and bring new revenue to the county. Using the resource providers from the Department of Economic Development, the University of Nebraska Extension Services or Central Community College to provide training on e-commerce is a possible way to assist business growth.
5. Quality of Life was the most frequently mentioned advantage for doing business in Colfax County. Ratings for cultural activities, family activities and recreational activities were “fair.” Enhancing these aspects of the quality of life will only make the community a more desirable location for new workers. Matching social activities with the interests of local businesses and residents will create a more inclusive environment for new residents. In addition, note that the rating for “Crime Rate” in the business factors is higher than the state average. One respondent list this as an issue for further assistance.
6. Follow-up actions to this report by both state and local economic development organizations is critical to helping businesses succeed in Schuyler and Colfax County. Forming new partnerships, in addition to strengthening existing collaborations, in addressing identified challenges will better position communities and the county for future growth and opportunities.

# APPENDIX

## Responses to open-ended survey questions:

“What is the most important action that state and local economic development organizations can take to best meet the needs of your business and/or industry?”

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tax Incentives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax incentives for new/relocating business</li> <li>• Business incentive</li> <li>• Tax incentives for small businesses not just for Wal-Mart and other large businesses</li> <li>• Tax incentives</li> <li>• Offer tax incentive to serve grocery stores to small towns</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Taxes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower taxes</li> <li>• Lower taxes - highway issue</li> <li>• Taxes</li> <li>• Low taxes</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Business Retention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy gas at my store</li> <li>• Business retention</li> <li>• Keeping job retention</li> <li>• A lot of affiliated stores for sale</li> <li>• Stay in business - grain prices and tight margins; large farmers</li> <li>• Markets</li> <li>• leading challenge business - elderly ownership</li> <li>• great warehousing</li> <li>• Focus on small farmers. small hog operations are forced out. business shrinking; top quality products. trade area 100 mile radius</li> <li>• Leading challenge industry - be creative, flexible</li> <li>• Very busy; Fairly new location</li> <li>• Grain and feed business good</li> <li>• Business varies by weather</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Business Expansion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote new industry</li> <li>• More industry</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Attract more English speaking businesses</li> <li>• Recruit more businesses to Howells</li> <li>• Attraction of primary jobs</li> <li>• More businesses in town, currently bedroom community</li> <li>• Bring more industry</li> <li>• New business along 91 to help small communities</li> <li>• New businesses in area</li> <li>• Motel</li> <li>• Permanent foundation business - need to draw people Hardware - appliance, clothing – retail – shoe</li> <li>• Happy to be in Howells/recruitment of NE people/industry would help the community</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Environmental Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns about ground water</li> <li>• Energy-efficient and fair use</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Government Regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in eliminating bureaucracy</li> <li>• Reduce hour of service regulations- 11 hrs - 10 hrs off-don't need 10 hours</li> <li>• Connecting rural America. Any business is against because national government trying to limit number of towers</li> <li>• Regulations, zip code</li> <li>• Zoning and expansion of business</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist w/ rail services,</li> <li>• Highway maintenance and improvement</li> <li>• Business service road</li> <li>• Moderation of DOT regulations (limited driving time)</li> <li>• UPS also of material (back haul issue still exists NE Trucking Assoc.?)</li> <li>• Highway transportation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Incentives for fixing up properties or low interest loans to do efforts</li> <li>• Need patient money to help on spec homes</li> <li>• Marketing, housing/lower cost housing</li> <li>• Adequate housing</li> <li>• Leading challenge to business - housing - immigration turnover with apartments - lack of stability,</li> <li>• 100 plus apartments and housing</li> <li>• People work here- live in Columbus</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Financial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low interest rates</li> <li>• More technical assistance on loan packaging- NENEDD come before (too late)</li> <li>• Make businesses aware of assistance available - tenant share space</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Signage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs on outside of town promoting businesses in town.</li> <li>• Signage "department of roads"</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local - need young people organization to socialize; Columbus and Schuyler could form organization</li> <li>• Keep small communities vibrant</li> <li>• Help schools</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Good support systems, transport and daycare</li> <li>• Improve attitudes about opportunities in Schuyler, diversity</li> <li>• Communicate regularly</li> <li>• Communication with community</li> <li>• Community Crime</li> <li>• Quality of education in Howells is great</li> <li>• Private school may assist livability; Need pre-school</li> <li>• Repair fountain in South Park and fix tower clock</li> <li>• School bond is a step in the right direction.</li> <li>• Grow town</li> <li>• "Schuyler" no longer a retirement community</li> <li>• Need to have Hispanic business go bilingual</li> <li>• Labor Day Parade</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Population/Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population/workforce</li> <li>• Population</li> <li>• Need more people</li> <li>• Help bring employees to community.</li> <li>• Need more population to still be here per week in 10 years</li> <li>• leading challenge to business – demographic</li> <li>• leading challenge for business - businesses with town for advertising</li> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Leading challenge to industry - burn out of drivers - truck driving - hard on families - regulations</li> <li>• Delivery drivers - over 18; Usually have 3-4 managers full-time; Pizza Hut training required for management</li> <li>• Workforce issues; workers continually come back</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community College follow-up</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	

# TABLES

<b>Population, Colfax County and Nebraska, 1990, 2000, and 2006</b>					
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2006*</b>	<b>% Change 1990-2000</b>	<b>% Change 2000-06</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	1,578,385	1,711,263	1,768,331	+8.4	+3.3
<b>Colfax County</b>	9,139	10,441	10,113	+14.2	-3.1
Clarkson	699	685	662	-2.0	-3.4
Howells	615	632	617	+2.8	-2.4
Leigh	447	442	418	-1.1	-5.4
Richland	96	89	86	-7.3	-3.4
Rogers	89	95	60	+6.7	-36.8
Schuyler	4,197	5,371	5,212	+28.0	-3.0
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2007					
*2006 is an estimate					

<b>Net Taxable Retail Sales, Nebraska and Colfax County, 2003 to 2006</b>					
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>% Change 2005-06</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	\$19,198,671,941	\$20,733,340,353	\$21,691,204,485	\$22,317,391,421	+2.9%
<b>Colfax County</b>	\$36,112,638	\$39,631,018	\$43,606,771	\$42,172,046	-3.3%
Clarkson	\$5,127,288	\$5,913,729	\$6,800,412	\$6,589,039	-3.1%
Howells	\$2,601,295	\$3,904,919	\$4,810,737	\$4,820,827	+0.2%
Leigh	\$2,369,386	\$2,807,886	\$2,989,344	\$2,927,464	-2.1%
Richland	\$282,766	\$364,560	\$410,143	\$456,195	+11.2%
Rogers	\$70,340	\$97,284	\$139,302	\$91,274	-34.5%
Schuyler	\$25,649,428	\$26,536,606	\$28,361,590	\$27,111,415	-4.4%
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue, March 2007					

# TABLES

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates and releases per capita income (PCI) numbers for the states and counties twice a year. Colfax County's average per capita income in 2005 was \$26,885. That was 81.6 percent of the Nebraska average of \$32,923.

<b>Per Capita Income, Colfax County and Nebraska, 2002 to 2005</b>					
	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>Change 2002-05</b>
<b>Per Capita Income</b>					
Nebraska	\$29,177	\$30,737	\$31,957	\$32,923	+12.8%
Colfax County	\$24,580	\$26,147	\$26,110	\$26,885	+9.4%
<small>Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, BEA, <a href="#">Survey of Current Business</a>, 2007</small>					

<b>County Business Patterns, Colfax County, Nebraska: 2005</b>							
NAICS*	Industry	Establishments		Employees		Annual Payroll (\$1,000)	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	<b>Total for all sectors</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,687</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>\$96,251</b>	<b>100.0</b>
21	Mining	1	0.4	a		D	
23	Construction	28	10.7	b		D	
31-33	Manufacturing	6	2.3	g		D	
42	Wholesale trade	16	6.1	135	3.7	4,838	5.0
44-45	Retail trade	52	19.8	331	9.0	6,718	7.0
48-49	Transportation & Warehouse	34	13.0	224	6.1	6,025	6.3
51	Information	6	2.3	b		D	
52	Finance & insurance	20	7.6	115	3.1	3,176	3.3
53	Real estate, rental & leasing	4	1.5	a		D	
54	Professional, scientific, & technical services	9	3.4	b		D	
56	Admin, support, waste mangmnt & remediation serv	3	1.1	b		D	
61	Educational services	2	0.8	a		D	
62	Health care & social ass't	17	6.5	271	7.4	6,510	6.8
71	Arts, entertainment, & recreation	4	1.5	a		D	
72	Accommodation & food servs	14	5.3	102	2.8	627	0.7
81	Other services (except public administration)	45	17.2	168	4.6	2,597	2.7
99	Industries not classified	1	0.4	a		D	

\*North American Industry Classification System, definition on page 23.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [County Business Patterns 2005, 2007](#).

## **BUSINESS DEFINITIONS**

**C Corporation-** A corporation whose profits are taxed separate from its owners under subchapter C of the Internal Revenue Code.

**S Corporation-** A form of corporation, allowed by the IRS for most companies with 75 or fewer shareholders, which enables the company to enjoy the benefits of incorporation but be taxed as if it were a partnership.

**Cooperative-** Comprises a commercial entity owned by its members, with no passive shareholders.

**Partnership-** A business partnership featuring two or more partners in which each partner is liable for any debts taken on by the business.

**Limited Liability-** A business structure that is a hybrid of a partnership and a corporation. Its owners are shielded from personal liability and all profits and losses pass directly to the owners without taxation of the entity itself.

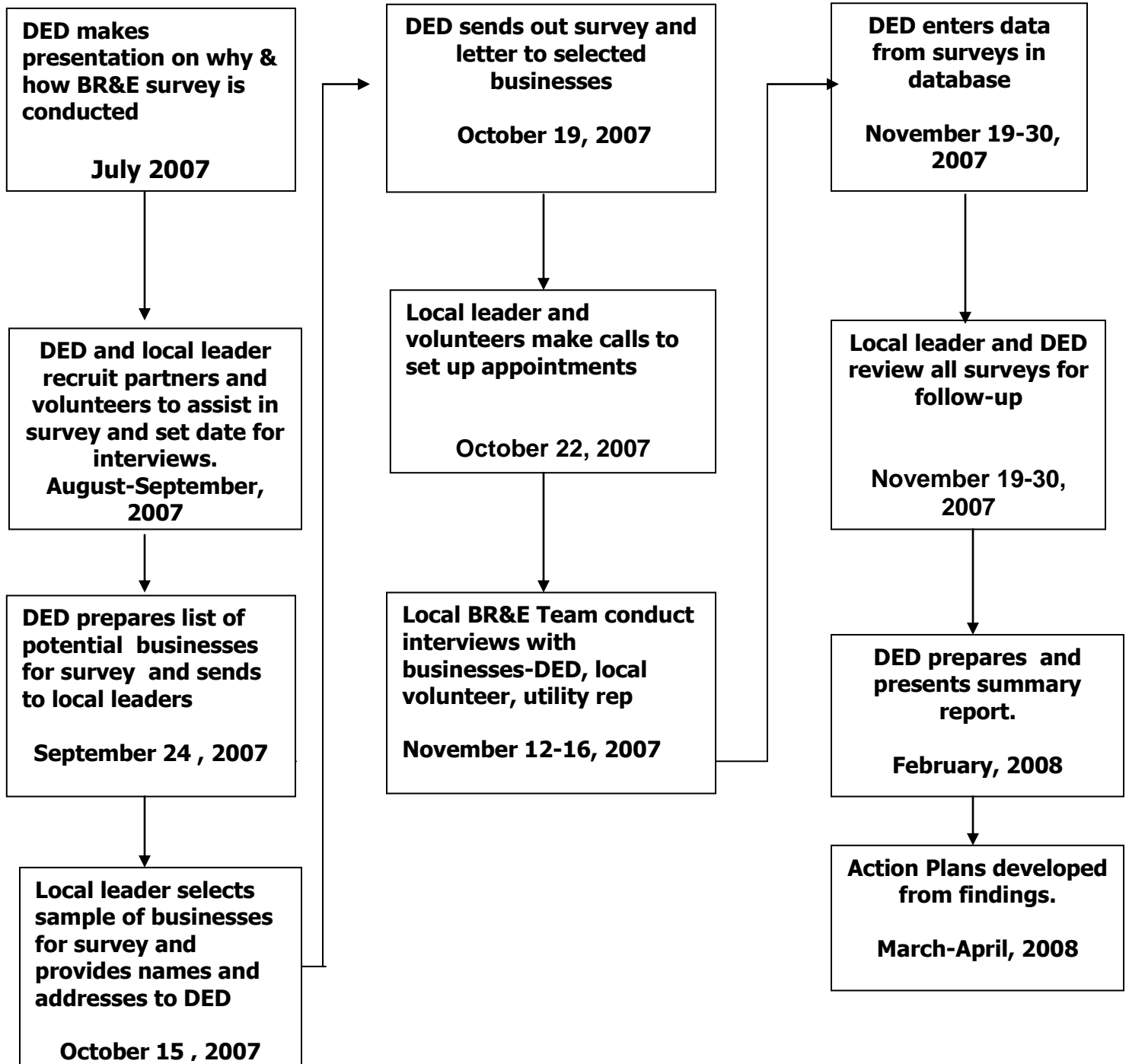
**Sole Proprietor-** A business owned and operated by one individual.

**North American Industry Classification System-** The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS, pronounced Nakes) was developed as the standard for use by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the collection, analysis, and publication of statistical data related to the business economy of the U.S. NAICS was developed under the auspices of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and adopted in 1997 to replace the old Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. It was also developed in cooperation with the statistical agencies of Canada and Mexico to establish a 3-country standard that allows for a high level of comparability in business statistics among the three countries. NAICS is the first economic classification system to be constructed based on a single economic concept. To learn more about the background, the development and the difference between NAICS and the SIC, see [www.census.gov/epcd/www/naicsdev.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naicsdev.htm).

**Per Capita Income-** PCI is the total personal income for an area divided by the total population. The calculation of per capita income assumes every child or adult, man or woman, etc. has the same income. That is manifestly not the case, so PCI numbers are not “necessarily a good indicator of typical living standards.” Rather, they shed a light on the overall economic well-being of an area.

# NEBRASKA *Advantage*

## NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM Schuyler/Colfax County



# NEBRASKA BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM

## INTERVIEW FORM

**Note:** This and similar interviews are being conducted around Nebraska to learn more about individual businesses to better assist them and to generally improve the climate for business development in the state. The interviews are a joint undertaking of the Nebraska Diplomats, the Nebraska Economic Developers Association, and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The names of the businesses and individuals participating in these interviews will not be shown in any published reports.

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

### General Business Information

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Interviewed: \_\_\_ Mr. \_\_\_ Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Site Address

Mailing Address (If Not Site Address)

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Nebraska, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Nebraska, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Internet Web Site Address (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you sell products or services over the Internet? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Do you export products? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If yes, to which countries do you export? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you import products? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If yes, from which countries do you import? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your business' primary products or services at this location? \_\_\_\_\_

**Industry:**

(Check just primary industry if more than one)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture  | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Insurance                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mining   | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction   | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Services                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale Trade  | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care and Social Assistance                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail Trade   | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and Warehousing                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation and Food Services                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information (Publishing, Broadcasting, Telecommunications) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____                     |

Has the business always had its present name? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If no, what was its most recent previous name? \_\_\_\_\_

Why was the name changed? Business sold, new product line, new marketing application, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

What is the legal structure of the business?

\_\_\_Sole Proprietorship \_\_\_ Partnership \_\_\_ S Corporation \_\_\_ C Corporation \_\_\_ Limited Liability Company \_\_\_ Cooperative \_\_\_ Government

Does this business have a parent company? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If yes, what is the parent company's name and headquarters location? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own or lease the building in which you do business? \_\_\_Own \_\_\_Lease

If leasing, when does the lease expire? \_\_\_\_\_

## Business Climate

Please rate each of the following factors in your community or region according to your level of satisfaction with them, giving ratings of 1 (excellent), 2 (good), 3 (fair), 4 (poor), or 5 (very poor) to each of the factors.

### Utilities

- Electrical Service
- Natural Gas Service
- Water Service
- Waste Water Service
- Solid Waste Removal
- Recycling
- Telephone
- Internet Access
- Cellular Phone

### Transportation

- Highway Access
- Local Streets and Roads
- Trucking Service
- Rail Service
- Air Service (Passenger)
- Air Service (Freight)

### Public Services

- Police Protection
- Fire Protection
- K-12 Education
- Vocational Education and Training
- Community College
- Four-Year College Education
- Graduate College Education

### Quality of Life

- Housing Available for Purchase
- Housing Available for Rent
- Housing Cost
- Recreational Activities
- Cultural Activities
- Family Activities
- Health Care
- Crime Rate

### Taxes and Regulatory Climate

- Local Government Spending Levels
- State Government Spending Levels
- Sales Tax Rate (Local and State)
- Real Property Tax Rate
- Personal Property Tax
- Personal Income Tax Rate
- Corporate Income Tax Rate
- Environmental Regulations
- Zoning Ordinances
- Permits and Inspections in General

### Labor

- Labor Availability
- Worker Productivity

What do you believe are the three major *advantages* to doing business in Nebraska and in your community?

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Climate                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Climate/Taxes       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of Living             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declining local/regional population | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic/Financial           | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Opportunities          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labor Availability                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor Cost                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor Quality/Productivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location/Markets                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Location/Supplier & Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Life                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Climate               | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxes                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities Cost               | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities Other            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)              |   |   |

What do you believe are the three major *disadvantages* to doing business in Nebraska and in your community?

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Climate                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Climate/Taxes       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of Living             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declining local/regional population | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic/Financial           | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Opportunities          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labor Availability                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor Cost                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor Quality/Productivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location/Markets                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Location/Supplier & Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Life                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Climate               | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxes                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities Cost               | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities Other            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)              |   |   |

## Work Force

How many persons are employed in your business in each of the following categories?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Year-Round: <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time | Seasonal: <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time             | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time           |

If there are seasonal jobs, in which month(s) does total employment peak?

- Spring (Mar.-May),  Summer (Jun.-Aug.)  Fall (Sept.-Nov.)  Winter (Dec.-Feb.)

How many persons have you hired in the past 12 months?  What are the titles and starting wages for the new employees?

No. Hired	Job Title	Starting Wage
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What is the title for the most frequently hired position in your business? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the starting hourly wage for this position? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you offer an employee benefit package?  Yes  No If yes, which of the following items does it include?  
 Health Insurance  Paid Sick Leave  Paid Vacation  Paid Holiday  Retirement Accounts  
 Profit Sharing (bonuses)  Life Insurance Other \_\_\_\_\_

Over the last three years, has the number of applicants for the most commonly hired position:  
 Increased?  Decreased?  Stayed about the same?

Over the last three years, has the quality of the applicants for the most commonly hired position:  
 Increased?  Decreased?  Stayed about the same?

Is your labor turnover:  Low?  Average?  High? Is your absenteeism:  Low?  Average?  High?

Have any of your positions been open for at least three months due to a lack of qualified applicants?  Yes  No  
If yes, what are those positions? \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the usefulness for each of the methods of employee recruitment listed below.

(0)Not used, 1 (Excellent), 2 (Good), 3 (Fair), 4(Poor)

Word of mouth  Company Web site

Newspaper advertisements  Internet sites

Radio  Employment agency

Nebraska Workforce Development  Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

(formerly Nebraska Job Service)

In order to work here what types of training do your current or prospective employees need?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you expect your business will have more total employees next year at this time than now?  Yes  No  
If yes, how many more employees do you expect? \_\_\_\_\_

What will be the job titles for those hired? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you anticipate the need to train your existing or new employees within the next year?  Yes  No  
If yes, how do you plan to train employees? \_\_\_\_\_

## Expansion and Investment Plans

Are you planning to expand the physical space of this business within the next three years?  Yes  No  
If yes, approximately how many square feet are you planning to add?

If yes, which of the following will be components of the expansion?

Office space

Commercial space

Manufacturing space

Warehousing

Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, will the expansion be primarily through owning or leasing additional space?  Owning?  Leasing?

If yes, do you think the present location and immediate area can accommodate the expansion?  Yes  No

If the present location cannot accommodate the expansion, what are your primary criteria for a good location?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there plans for other significant capital investment in this business for equipment, machinery, etc.?  Yes  No  
If yes, what type of machinery and equipment? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, what will be the approximate total capital spending in the next year (including expansion of physical space, if any)? \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to conventional commercial financing, has your business ever used any of the following resources?

Industrial development revenue bonds

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) economic development loan program

U.S. Small Business Administration

USDA's Rural Development programs

Community Improvement Financing (tax increment financing)

Other (please specify)

Have you ever used any of the state and local tax incentives available to businesses in Nebraska? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
If yes, which ones have you used? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like more information on financing options and/or tax incentives for businesses investing in the state and creating jobs? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Do you think your business should some day be expanded or relocated outside of Nebraska? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If yes, why? \_\_\_\_\_

Have persons from other states or communities contacted you in the last 2 years about relocating or expanding in their areas? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If yes, what states or communities did they represent? \_\_\_\_\_

### Business Assistance Programs

Is there any type of business assistance that your business wants or needs? For example, locating suppliers, e-commerce, marketing, dealing with government regulations, transferring business ownership, quality management systems, etc.? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If yes, please identify the type of assistance that is needed. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think will be the *leading challenge for your business* in the next few years? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think will be the *leading challenge to your industry* in the next few years? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other types of businesses that, if located in or near the community, would be beneficial to your business?

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If yes, please briefly describe the type(s) of business. \_\_\_\_\_

What is the *most important* action that state and local economic development organizations can take to best meet the needs of your business and/or industry? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive, via e-mail, *Nebraska Development News*, the newsletter of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Is there any other information you would like the Department or other economic development ally to provide you?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_No If yes, what information? \_\_\_\_\_

This concludes the interview. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any additional comments, please provide them here:

Observations of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_