



The **Southeast Nebraska Partners for Progress** is a partnership of five counties in Southeast Nebraska: Nemaha, Richardson, Pawnee, Johnson and Otoe. The group formed in 2008 as the result of a regional summit to address some of the needs of Southeast Nebraska. To fund the project, communities in each of the counties invested funds to match a BECA Grant which was awarded in November of 2008. The original matching funds were committed by the communities of Auburn, Pawnee City, Falls City, Humboldt, Talmage and Nebraska City. Since the grant was awarded, a number of other communities have added to the effort including DuBois, Burchard, Lewiston, Steinhauer, Table Rock and Syracuse.

Meetings of the group in January, February and April of 2009 focused on the process of developing a regional website in addition to continuing to research and install technology for the Inventors, Investors and Entrepreneurs (I2E) Club. Each of the participating communities is represented on the website with individual community pages. See [www.southeastnebraska.org](http://www.southeastnebraska.org). The communities continue to update their information and add new information as it becomes available. The primary goal of the website is for population recruitment. The website is targeted at individuals interested in coming to or returning to Southeast Nebraska.

Originally the group thought that the alumni associations of each of their schools would be an easy mechanism to get the word out about the website. But what quickly became apparent was that the alumni association's reticence to provide or allow access to the alumni. In response the group developed a 'business card' for the website to



distribute to locations in each of their respective communities. The cards were printed with a common front and then personalize on the back for each community. One primary target being the community's funeral homes, while this sounds strange it was recognized that unfortunately many of the alums return for their parents, grand parents or family members' funeral. Each of the participating communities received several hundred cards to distribute within their community. This included funeral homes, banks and city hall to name a few.

The group approved the use of CareerLink as the job listing database management system for the job listing portion of the website. An agreement was signed between River Country Economic Development Corporation (the precursor to Nebraska City Area Economic Development Corp), on behalf of the Southeast Nebraska Partners for

Progress, and the AIM Institute. This has been a positive addition to the website. Our office has helped several companies add job postings to the site.

Another great program which started with the 5 county group and received some very critical funding through the BECA grant is The Inventors, Investors & Entrepreneurs Club (**I<sup>2</sup>E**). The steering committee continues to play an important role in the development of **I<sup>2</sup>E** with Dr. Connie Reimers-Hild taking the lead on facilitating and coordinating the club. However, the organizational/community sponsors take on the responsibility for monthly sessions on a rotating schedule. The club continues to meet the second Tuesday of each month from 5:30-8:30 pm at the UNL Kimmel Education & Research Center in Nebraska City. Since the launch of the club, two businesses have started, one building was purchased, one website was created for an attendee by another attendee, and the Talmage Chamber of Commerce was resurrected in the Southeast Nebraska Region. [www.i2eclub.org](http://www.i2eclub.org)

The UNL Kimmel Education & Research Center has purchased a video camera and webcam to record speaker interviews before the meetings. They are also using BREEZE to record and deliver educational sessions after the evening meetings. The files are saved into an electronic format and made available via e-mail links. Speaker interviews are also being posted on YouTube. Thanks to our BECA grant we were able to add these training opportunities to the **I<sup>2</sup>E** club's offerings.

Our most recent group effort was a three panel brochure and DVD used to promote three available properties in Richardson, Nemaha and Otoe counties. These marketing pieces were a collaborative effort of the group and were used at the **MAEDC's** (Mid America Economic Development Council) conference in Chicago in December of 2009. These marketing items were used at the show as well as mailed to each of the attending site selectors after the conference was over. This was an excellent way to get our piece of Nebraska in front of these marketers.

We are very grateful for the funds we have received here in Southeast Nebraska from the BECA grant and appreciate how we have been able to leverage our investment for the promotion of Southeast Nebraska.

**On behalf of the Southeast Nebraska Partners for Progress**

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