



## **Creating Good Jobs and Self Employment Opportunities In Small Town and Rural Nebraska**

As your state Senator, I will be a champion for revitalizing the small town and rural economy. I will be a partner for local leaders working to strengthen our communities and provide a future for our way of life.

There is real potential to create good jobs and small businesses in our communities. The internet enables small town businesses to tap lucrative distant markets. New opportunities are arising for small scale, high technology manufacturing. Value added agriculture is flourishing, creating new opportunities on the farm and in farm related businesses. And Nebraska has the natural resources to be the nation's leader in renewable energy production.

But current state policy is ill-suited to realize the full potential of these new opportunities. State government has neglected the small town and rural economy. Tax incentives and regulatory policies are biased against small business. We have not adequately addressed workforce training needs. And Nebraska has fallen far behind in policies that support renewable energy.

I've spent my entire life working with, listening to and learning from small town and rural Nebraskans about how to create a future in our communities. I want to use what I've learned to help us get a fair shake from state government to create good jobs and self employment opportunities in our communities. In the Legislature, I will pursue three priority strategies:

### **1) Support small business development, value-added agriculture and new farm and ranch enterprises.**

- *Expand tax incentives for small business, beginning farmers, owner-operated livestock production and bioscience* - The Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise tax credit provides a shot in the arm to start or grow a small business, farm, or ranch. It provides a 20%, \$10,000 refundable tax credit to beginning farmers, value-added or non-traditional farm enterprises and nonfarm businesses with up to five employees. But the credit is capped at \$2 million annually for all beneficiaries combined, which prevents it from achieving its potential to grow our economy. I will fight to remove that cap. Another tax credit, the Livestock Modernization Investment Tax Credit provides an incentive for our farmers to invest in starting and expanding livestock production. I will work to increase the credit from 10% of investment to 15% on the first \$100,000 of investment. Finally, I will work to modernize Nebraska Advantage Tax Credits to provide a new tier for bioscience firms



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that are not large enough to qualify for the regular credit, but create good jobs. That has particular potential to stimulate growth in the 16th Legislative District.

- *Support funding for small business development and value added agriculture* - The state of Nebraska invests over \$1.5 million annually in grants to farmers and ranchers to launch value added agriculture initiatives and programs to provide loans, training and technical assistance to small businesses. These programs support entrepreneurship and create new economic opportunity in rural Nebraska. I will work to keep them well funded.

- *Make Nebraska Small Business Friendly* – Complicated regulations and compliance requirements are especially burdensome to small businesses that don't have dedicated staff to address them. I support creation of a task force to identify regulations that impose disproportionate costs on small business and devise common sense alternatives. We can achieve health, environmental and public safety objectives in a manner practical for small business. The task force could also be charged with developing refinements to tax and other compliance requirements to make them less burdensome for small business.

## **2) Improve and expand job training programs.**

- *Provide meaningful state funding for job training partnerships between schools and employers* - Nebraska has good jobs going unfilled due to a mismatch between worker skills and available jobs. The lack of trained workers is preventing employers from growing their businesses and our state's economy, especially in manufacturing. I support legislation to provide state funding incentives for schools, community colleges, unions, and employers to work in partnership to train students and workers for good jobs in high demand fields.

- *Encourage dual credit classes for high school students* – I will work to increase opportunity for high schools students to receive dual credit for community college courses as early as their junior year, including making tuition assistance available to families that need it.

- *State funded apprenticeships*- I will work to expand state fund funded apprenticeships and internships in fields where there is a shortage of skilled workers.

## **3) Develop a strategy for expanding future opportunities in renewable energy**

- *Next generation biofuels*- I will sponsor legislation to create a task to develop a strategy to make Nebraska a leader in next generation biofuels while protecting our soil and water and addressing the challenge of climate change. Next generation biofuels are those produced from grass, crop residue, and other cellulosic feed stocks. To maximize good



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jobs and opportunity in small town and rural Nebraska, we must keep our state on the forefront of biofuel production.

- *Stand up for ethanol* – I will be a champion for Nebraska’s ethanol industry. I will challenge anti-ethanol attacks like the EPA’s proposal to reduce the amount of ethanol used in the nation’s fuel supply under the Renewable Fuel Standard. I will work to expand Nebraska markets for Nebraska ethanol by shifting state’s vehicles to E-15 and working to increase the number of blender pumps in our state. It's common sense to use more of our ethanol close to home.
- *Develop Nebraska’s world class wind and solar resource* – Nebraska has some of the nation’s best wind for electric generation, but lags behind most surrounding states in development. As a result, we lose thousands of good jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue and landowner payments. I support a state tax credit to jump start wind and solar development that supports local businesses and enables Nebraskans to share in ownership. I will also explore strategies to connect Nebraska to growing markets for renewable electricity in the nation’s population centers so we can export electricity.