Dear Fellow Nebraskans

By Gov. Dave Heineman

Nebraska is open for business and ready to meet and exceed the expectations of anyone interested in doing business throughout our state. As Governor, I have focused on international trade, direct investment and the creation of new export opportunities. That was our focus for Nebraska's second Reverse Trade Mission.

In 2008, we hosted the first Reverse Trade Mission. It was attended by 140 representatives from 8 countries. With 117 representatives from 15 countries participating in this year's events, it's clear that there is strong interest in doing business in Nebraska.

From 2005 to 2010, Nebraska exports increased from $3 billion to $5.8 billion. Nebraska's four largest trade partners are Canada, Mexico, Japan and China with over 350 foreign-owned businesses employing more than 19,000 workers in Nebraska. Exports to China increased from $111 million in 2005 to $279 million in 2010 – a 150% increase in five years.

A main feature of our Reverse Trade Mission is the benefits of the Nebraska Advantage. In 2005, I worked with legislative leaders to craft a comprehensive update to Nebraska's business incentives known as the Nebraska Advantage Act.

The Nebraska Advantage Act was the first business incentive update in more than 2 decades. This legislation was designed to help create a business climate that makes Nebraska the preferred destination for starting, growing or relocating an existing business in communities throughout our state.

The Nebraska Advantage has been successful at promoting the growth of existing companies through job retention, expansion and new capital investments; increasing the number of successful new business ventures in the state; and fostering the development of new products and ideas, while recognizing the varying needs of Nebraska's diverse industries. As a result of the Nebraska Advantage, more than 260 businesses will invest approximately $5.8 billion in our economy and create more than 19,200 jobs over the next few years.

The first Reverse Trade Mission was very successful. Even as we host our guests of the second, we continue to see results from the first. For example, last spring, we welcomed a manufacturer of lawn equipment to Beatrice. This China-based company cited the outstanding Nebraska Advantage incentives as a main reason for locating in Nebraska. Additionally, as part of the kickoff of our second Reverse Trade Mission, I was pleased to announce that a bio-tech company from Germany is investing over $80 million in an expansion at its Blair facility thanks in part to our economic tax incentive program.

As a result of our current Reverse Trade Mission, there are two manufacturing companies and one technology company from Korea and China that will locate in Nebraska, and an additional technology company from South Africa has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to expand their current operations in Nebraska.

I am pleased to announce these international business expansions and investments in Nebraska as the result of our Reverse Trade Mission and the important relationships we have developed with our international guests. These companies could have located anywhere in the world, but they are choosing to come to Nebraska.

We had several successful projects to discuss during the reverse Trade Mission including the growing number of international companies who are interested in expanding in Nebraska. These companies continue to cite the relationships we build, Nebraskan's work ethic and our competitive tax incentives as just a few of the many reasons that Nebraska is an ideal home to locate and expand business.

This is just the beginning of what we expect as a result of the second Reverse Trade Mission. Our business-friendly atmosphere and Nebraska's work ethic is unsurpassed anywhere else in the world. As we continue to develop relationships with these and other countries, we look forward to bringing additional business opportunities and investments to Nebraska.