Two hundred attend annual training, banquet in Kearney

More than 200 volunteer community leaders and guests heard encouraging news earlier this month about the future of Nebraska.
Young adults are increasingly interested in returning home to live, work and raise their families.

That was the message delivered by several speakers at the Nebraska Community Foundation's annual banquet, Thursday, Nov. 8 in Kearney.
Jane Moreland, a Fund Advisory Committee member of the Imperial Community Foundation Fund, said that Imperial and Chase County are growing again, with new families moving back into the area.
"This doesn't just happen; it takes everyone working together to make our community the kind of place that young people want to return to. And it requires patience," Moreland said.
Moreland thanked NCF for its help in teaching local leaders how to raise and invest charitable dollars in ways that will have long-term, positive impact.
Gavin Harsh, a senior at McCook High School, explained how young people are supported in his community through the McCook Community Foundation Fund's youth advisory council. Harsh is the co-president of Youth Change Reaction, which has raised funds and made grants to benefit and engage students of all ages.
"Through Youth Change Reaction more and more young adults are getting involved in McCook. One of the highlights for me is that we are having real input into planning for downtown revitalization," Harsh said.
The program also featured a video story about the work of NCF and its affiliated fund, Holt County Economic Development.
The camera followed three families who have moved back to Holt County to start businesses and raise their families. Since 2007, 29 new businesses have been created, 18 have been expanded and 10 have been successfully transitioned to new owners resulting in 239 new jobs. More than 120 families and/or individuals have moved into the county.
NCF President & CEO Jeff Yost reminded the audience that Nebraska is a place of abundance. In the next 50 years more than $600 billion will transfer from one generation to the next.
"Volunteers across the state are helping our citizens harness this abundance in charitable gifts, and importantly, in planned gifts that will go on giving forever through unrestricted community endowments," Yost said.
NCF and its 221 affiliated funds now have more than $120 million in current assets, endowed assets and planned gifts for the future.
"This is impressive, but we must do much more. In 51 counties, the peak years of intergenerational wealth transfer are happening now or in the next 10 years. Building endowments is important, but building the capacity of our communities is just as important.
We are focused on more than just raising money and making grants. NCF is a community development institution that's using philanthropy to craft a tomorrow where our communities are the kinds of places that our kids will want to call home," Yost said.
Former U.S. Congressman Doug Bereuter explained why he chose to serve as a volunteer member of the NCF Board of Directors.
"I believe in our mission, and I believe in the approach that the Nebraska Community

Foundation is taking to help build strong communities. The future of Nebraska depends on the strength of our communities all across the state," Bereuter said.

With NCF's emphasis on planning gifts for the future, NCF presented its third Community Legacy Award.

The Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund received the award, because each of its nine Fund Advisory Committee members has made a significant planned gift commitment to benefit their community in the future.

Also honored during the program was F.E. Pete Peterson of Brule, who completed his third three-year term. Peterson served as NCF treasurer for most of those years, and will continue to volunteer for some committee work.

Two newly elected NCF board members were introduced: Lora Damme of Talmage, a community banker, and Al Steuter of Johnstown, a rancher and environmental consultant.

Major sponsors for the annual event were Bellevue University, Pinnacle Bank, Union Bank and the Omaha Office of Westwood Trust.

Preceding the banquet, more than 100 people participated in a daylong training, offering sessions on fundraising, grant-making, engaging youth, leadership development and communications and social media.

Also attending the annual banquet and training were Lori Pankonin, Elna Johnson and Randy Vlasin.

NCF is a national model for community development philanthropy, which uses charitable giving as a tool for revitalizing local economies.

NCF's 221 affiliated funds serve 235 Nebraska communities in 79 counties; NCF supports 1,800 volunteer leaders through training, organizing, planning and networking.

More than $97 million has been reinvested in communities over the past five years. More than 35,000 contributions were made through the Nebraska Community Foundation in the last five years.

For more information go to www.nebcommfound.org