

**FOCUS
FORWARD**  **20
20**

Agenda

JUNE 2020

BACK TO BUSINESS



playbook

Recently, our team at the Kearney Chamber worked to put together a manual for businesses that were in the process of opening their doors or resuming business with regular hours. We wanted to present a publication for all businesses that contained all information currently available. With so much information being released daily, and with some of that information being incomplete, we wanted

to share a resource that business owners and consumers both know is from a reliable and trusted source. The playbook not only provides images that can be downloaded and shared with employees or consumers, it also contains links to local government sites that are updated frequently with the newest guidelines and regulations. "The Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce wanted to get the leg work done for our busy business owners. We wanted to ensure that our local businesses had the most up-to-date information, all in one place," President/CEO Derek Rusher shared. Overall, this is a great resource for anyone looking for an up to date manual of COVID-19 directives.

To read the entire playbook, follow this link and download to print:

<https://www.kearneycoc.org/covid19>

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- 6 Rules to Keep Nebraska Healthy
- Links to Nebraska Guidelines, broken down by industry
- A link to Test Nebraska
- General recommendations for customers and employees
- Printable flyers of COVID-19 best practices
- Tips for team communication
- How to prepare your space for customers
- Cleaning/disinfecting tips for after opening
- PPE Guidelines
- Ways to stay prepared
- How to make your own mask
- A printable guide on how to properly wear a mask
- How long COVID-19 lives on surfaces and in food and water
- A chart of symptoms between COVID, the flu, and a cold
- How and where to update your business information
- Hiring during COVID-19 and how the Chamber can help
- Information on local organizations who can help with hiring
 - Economic Development Council of Buffalo County
 - Kearney Works
- Our Thank You to you.



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Kearney Chamber Word Search

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O U N U T T F L O E G Z R D D S P R S F
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Your Chamber and You - Strength and Success.

Contributions by Derek Rusher

Over the last two and a half years the Chamber has been adamant about adding value for our members. We know what makes our businesses tick and how members derive value for their investments. That has all changed over the last few months. Just remember that we were here for your business before COVID-19 and we will be here for your business after COVID-19.

What a perfect time to invest in the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, when we as the Chamber are working to add even more value to your membership. The Kearney Chamber is only as strong as our members, and we see great strength in you. No other organization represents the business community like your Chamber. No other brand is recognized across the region as an organization fighting for the rights of employers, and no other group balances the needs of the business community with the needs of the general community like your Chamber.

We have been navigating complicated government processes and protecting your rights so you can stay focused on keeping your business afloat. We have spoken to Governor Ricketts, State Senators, Members of Congress and any other person with a .gov email address in order to convince them how important it is that the economy is not in opposition of public health. Both can coexist safely and prosperously together.

Your Chamber is your business' life raft in the troubled waters of COVID-19. We were the life raft for you during the great recession and we will be again the next time a crisis rolls around.

You might have received some value out of your membership via our STIK e-Gift card program, COVID web page, the KAEER Fund (which has distributed almost \$130k back to employees of Buffalo County,) the Back to Business Playbook or any other resources we have provided in the last few months, but you can't put a price on the value you're receiving from your Chamber's advocacy efforts aimed at the federal, state, and local government. Over many years, your Chamber's leaders have built relationships between our organization and all of the public officials. This ensures that our member's voice will be heard, even in times of crisis.

We hope you'll take advantage of all the programming we are providing, mostly free of charge, to keep you engaged with government and business leaders. We're doing this for you in hopes it will help your business succeed.

If your business is looking for PPE, the state has set up a [link](#):

https://form.jotform.com/NebraskaDHHS/PPERequestForm?blm_aid=292875

Click [here](#) to see the new guidelines from OSHA as well.

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

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LEADERSHIP LEVEL MEMBER HIGHLIGHT: NORTHWESTERN ENERGY NATURAL GAS UTILITY

Recently, we sat down with Luke Choyeski and Dennis Placke of **NorthWestern Energy Natural Gas Utility** to discuss the ongoing support that **NorthWestern Energy** provides to the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce. Each year, **NorthWestern Energy** chooses to be a Leadership Level member. When asked the reasons why, they provided great insight into how important the community is to **NorthWestern Energy**.



NorthWestern Energy is proud of its start in small communities in providing essential services that allowed them to grow and prosper. Today, they are proud to serve 734,800 residential and business customers with electricity and natural gas. **NorthWestern Energy** has provided reliable and affordable energy to customers in Nebraska, Montana, and South Dakota for more than 100 years. They have locations throughout Nebraska in Kearney, Grand Island, Alda, and North Platte. Taking their current form in 2002, the company bought the Montana Power electric and natural gas transmission and distribution system.



Why does NorthWestern Energy choose to be a Leadership Level member?

"The economic development to all of our communities is paramount in what we do. By making sure we are involved in all aspects of the community, like commercial and residential, we are being good citizens ourselves." **NorthWestern Energy** sees the incredible value of being involved on a volunteer level and being a Leadership Level Chamber member encourages Kearney's success in many different ways. "We are a silent neighbor, so the Chamber puts our brand out there to showcase and let people know we are here to serve you."

(...continued on page 6)



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LEADERSHIP LEVEL MEMBER HIGHLIGHT: NORTHWESTERN ENERGY NATURAL GAS UTILITY

How is NorthWestern Energy looking to continue providing the best service in Kearney?

The safety of the public, along with safety checks, is our primary focus. The company has responders on call 24/7 to ensure **NorthWestern Energy** is dedicated to providing the best and safest service. The growing company works with the **Economic Development Council of Buffalo County** to help new businesses as well as continue growth in the area with newly built homes. Maintaining costs, controls, and expenses allows **NorthWestern** to be an cost efficient energy provider for the growing demands of the city.

Numerous building renovations around the Kearney and Grand Island area lend in **NorthWestern's** efforts to reinvest while making system improvements. An annual budget is created to help all of the communities grow and prosper. This money is put into the Kearney infrastructure and the growth of the community allows revenue for **NorthWestern** to make those upgrades. They want to provide the best services to the community to Kearney and our 11,000 customers in the area through great service and customer care."

How does NorthWestern Energy give back to the Kearney community?

NorthWestern focuses philanthropy efforts annually on giving funds to 501c3 organizations like **Junior Achievement, United Way of the Kearney Area, Kearney Area Animal Shelter, Jubilee Center**, local firefighters, and **The S.A.F.E. Center**. Educational opportunities are provided to technical, construction management, and engineering students attending **UNK** through scholarship funds. "Our hope is that students in these fields will find **NorthWestern Energy** as a future employer and as a great place to work. We want to be leaders in the community." As sponsors of Community Connections, **NorthWestern Energy** has more chances to work with other leaders in the community and really get to know what is going on.



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KEARNEY AREA BY THE NUMBERS

NEBRASKA COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

	March 2020	March 2019
Adams	4.3%	3.3%
Buffalo	3.6%	2.6%
Douglas	4.6%	3.6%
Hall	4.9%	3.6%
Lancaster	3.7%	2.9%
Lincoln Co	4.4%	3.4%
Nebraska	4.2%	3.2%
USA	4.5%	3.9%

LOCAL OPTIONS SALES & USE TAX

	March 2020	March 2019
Kearney	\$977,174.59	\$1,075,283.61
Grand Island	\$1,839,050.95	\$1,478,137.69
Hastings	\$543,133.09	\$516,878.70
North Platte	\$602,886.47	\$652,713.59

LODGING TAX RECEIPTS

	March 2020	March 2019
Buffalo	\$50,927.23	\$109,352.37
Hall	\$41,750.20	\$81,729.15
Adams	\$7,286.98	\$15,016.20
Lincoln Co	\$34,374.90	\$54,911.71



**NUMBERS
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NET TAXABLE SALES

	February 2020	February 2019	% Change
Buffalo	\$56,233,446	\$55,166,318	1.9%
Hall	\$79,046,418	\$70,111,728	12.7%
Adams	\$29,244,116	\$25,677,532	13.9%
Lincoln Co	\$33,845,829	\$31,161,177	8.6%

MOTOR VEHICLE SALES

	February 2020	February 2019	% Change
Buffalo	\$8,940,473	\$7,679,013	16.4%
Hall	\$10,944,737	\$9,600,786	14.0%
Adams	\$7,385,906	\$4,418,937	67.1%
Lincoln Co	\$6,734,354	\$5,138,103	31.1%

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