



Annual Report 2007

"We are proud to support GROW Nebraska. GROW continues to open doors to national and international markets for Nebraska's entrepreneurs and small businesses. Growing GROW Nebraska is good for Nebraska business."

Richard J. Baier

Director, Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Dear Friends:

2007 was the year GROW Nebraska, an affiliated fund of the Central Plains Foundation, Inc., truly enabled its members to sell to the world with the launch of an eCommerce web site at www.buygrownebraska.org. A year-round store and training center opened at Kearney's Hilltop Mall which also serves as the central shipping location for the eCommerce site. These projects allow consumers to support Nebraska artists and businesses by putting money directly into their hands through purchase of their products and by helping to fund GROW Nebraska's training efforts through sales commissions charged to members.

In 2007, GROW Nebraska received \$81,464 in state and federal grant funding, and \$16,925 in corporate support and private donations for \$98,564 of support. The program generated \$258,950 in sales of member products, creating a return on investment of \$2.62 for every dollar received in funding. GROW Nebraska delivers growth for Nebraska's economy.

New projects in 2007 included a Corporate and Personal Gift Basket Catalog that generated many sales and raised awareness of Nebraska products. The Friends of GROW Nebraska opportunity was launched to raise awareness in both the corporate and private sectors of the program and the opportunity to support entrepreneurship in the state through a donation to GROW Nebraska.

Please take a look at all that GROW Nebraska and its members accomplished in 2007. Thank you for supporting the program, the members, and for taking the time to learn more about us.

With best regards,

Janell Anderson Ehrke
CEO
GROW Nebraska

John Koller
Board Chairman
Central Plains Foundation, Inc.

Central Plains Foundation Board of Directors

John Koller
ATC Communications

Dale Long
D&D Service

Sheryl Koller
ATC Communications

Karla Warner
First State Bank, Holbrook

Judy Maline
OR RN Consultant

Barbara Pfeiffer
Retired Professional

John Hanson
Ag Development Inc.

GROW Nebraska

416 Center Avenue
P.O. Box 7

Holbrook NE 68948

888.GROWNEB

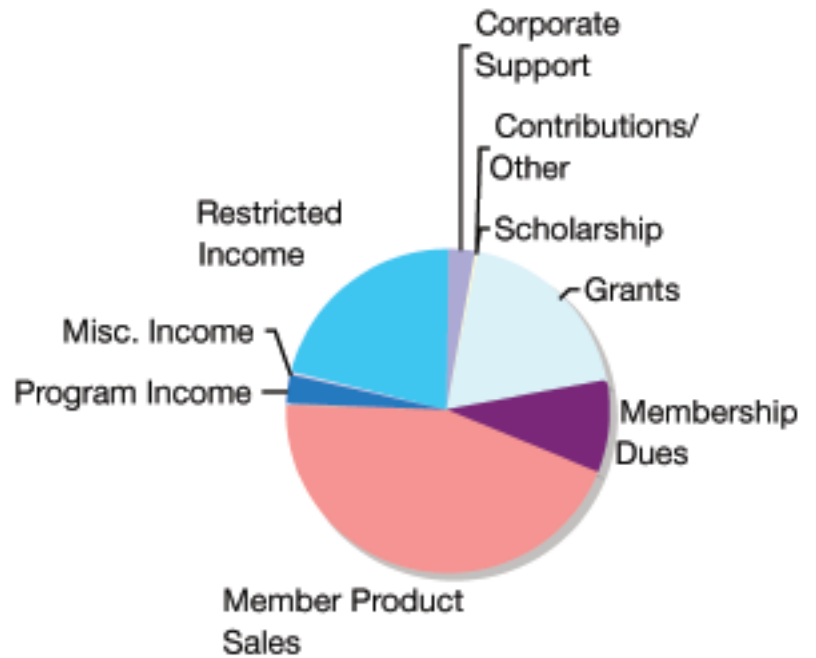
Fax (308) 493-5396

info@growneb.com

www.grownebraska.org

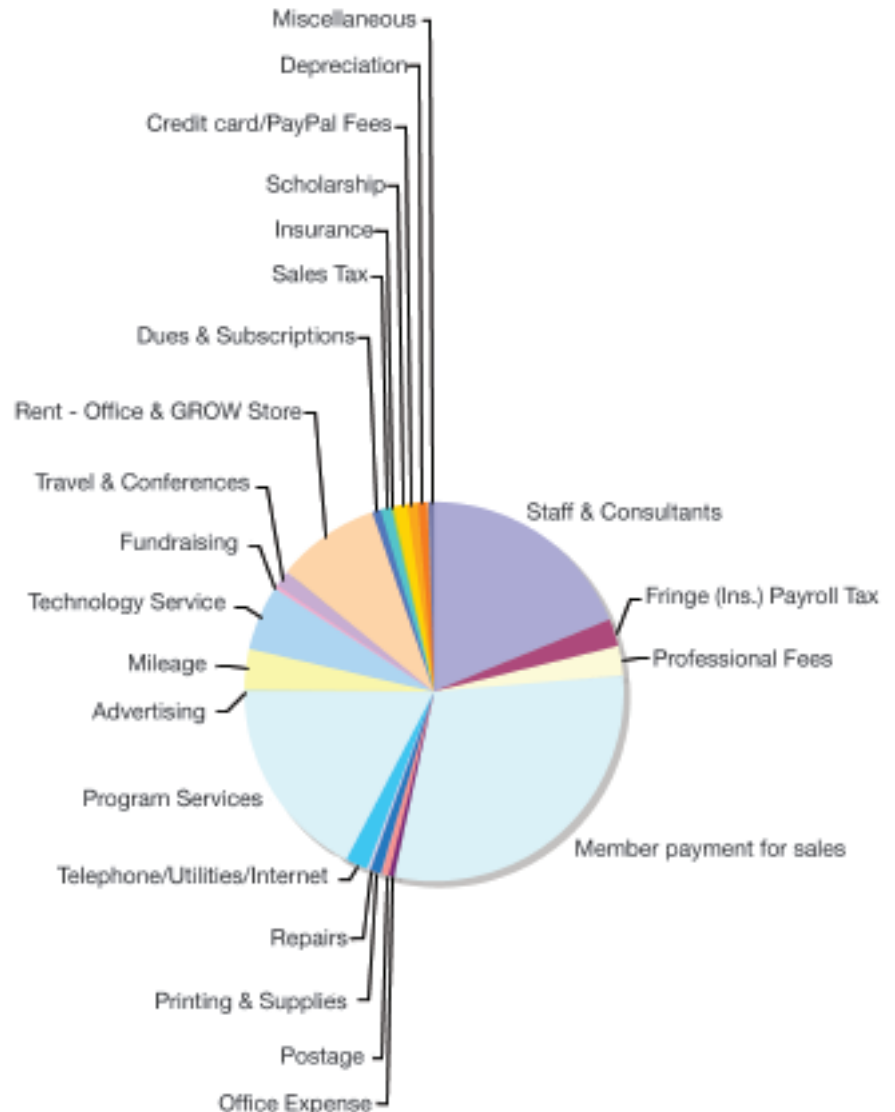
2007 Income

Corporate Support	\$16,750.00
Contributions/Other	\$175.00
Scholarship	\$200.00
Grants	\$111,305.02
Membership Dues	\$52,072.10
Member Product Sales	\$258,950.01
Program Income	\$17,755.71
Misc. Income	\$1,536.60
Restricted Income	\$122,619.98
Total Income	\$581,364.42



2007 Expenses

Staff & Consultants	\$86,476.40
Fringe (Ins.) & Payroll Taxes	\$9,732.77
Professional Fees	\$12,382.05
Member payments for sales	\$135,280.27
Office Expense	\$2,974.29
Postage	\$2,543.29
Printing & Supplies	\$5,575.17
Repairs	\$928.74
Telephone/Utilities/Internet	\$8,845.44
Program Services	\$79,018.94
Advertising	\$1,615.72
Mileage	\$15,076.63
Technology Service	\$25,541.32
Fundraising	\$930.81
Travel & Conferences	\$7,142.02
Rent - Office & GROW Stores	\$39,746.74
Dues & Subscriptions	\$3,676.93
Sales Tax	\$4,300.57
Insurance	\$1,514.00
Scholarship	\$4,588.31
Credit card/Paypal Fees	\$4,351.55
Depreciation	\$3,921.85
Miscellaneous	\$2,271.91
Total Expenses	\$458,435.79



Surplus(Deficit) \$122,928.63

GROW Nebraska Advisory Committee

Don Reynolds

South Platte Chamber of Commerce

Gary Peterson

Guggenmos & Peterson Law Offices

Katrina Frey

Heavenly Creations

Dave McIntosh

Consultant

Suzanne Wise

Nebraska Arts Council

Linda Fettig

Nebraska Rural Dev. Commission

Jim Crandall

Nebraska Cooperative Dev. Center

Bruce Rieker

Nebraska Hospital Association

Ronda Jaeschke

SourceGas

Dena R. Beck

REAP

Randall Gunn

South Central Nebraska R C & D

Rick Nelsen

NPPD

Julene Schoen

US Bank

Nic Ehrke

Union Bank and Trust

Tim Armstrong

Great Plains Communications



A large part of GROW Nebraska's growth and success is due to the consistent financial support of the Nebraska Microenterprise Partnership Fund (NMPF), Nebraska's statewide microenterprise intermediary. NMPF provides support to programs that provide services to micro/small businesses across the state. These programs provide training, technical assistance and/or loans to businesses.

NMPF, a private, non-profit organization, was formed in 1994. As a statewide intermediary, NMPF gathers federal, state and local dollars, disbursing them to programs for use in covering operating costs and in making loans to businesses. In addition, NMPF provides capacity building training, research/development, and evaluation services to programs.

In 1997, NMPF was certified as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) of the U.S. Treasury Department. That same year, NMPF was awarded the national Presidential Award for Excellence in Microenterprise Development.

The statewide intermediary model makes it possible to maintain sources of capital for programs, while building and maintaining a network that blankets the state with business services. You can learn more about NMPF at www.nebbiz.org.

"Thank you GROW for your web site design services! We handed the project over to Erin and were very surprised at the customer response in the first two weeks. We have sold and re-sold online to customers we would never have reached in our local area. Having an online shopping chart is a necessity if you want to grow your business. Thanks again GROW! Your assistance was DEFINITELY worth it!!!"

*Kris Vrtiska, Owner
Heritage Falls
Candles & Gifts
Falls City, Nebraska*



"GROW Nebraska is an invaluable tool for small businesses across the state. We have benefited in many different ways including networking with other small food companies across the state. Through a partnership between GROW and REAP, we received funding for a marketing expansion. The retail opportunities throughout the state are a great way to sell retail direct without having the expenses involved with a retail operation. The membership fee and ancillary services are affordable for start-up and existing small businesses."

*James Gustafson
Owner
Pur Java
Lincoln, Nebraska*



GROW Nebraska Staff

Janell Anderson Ehrke

Founder and CEO

Sara Stevens-Stehl

Grant Writer and Special Projects

Erin Malzer

Webmaster/Art Coordinator

Kristi Bose

Media & Public Relations Coordinator

Heidi High

Development Coordinator

Carla Voss

Retail Coordinator

Alison Osborne

GROW Nebraska Art Coordinator

Ima Gene Mason

Member Correspondence

Cheryl Hughes

Food/Beverage Consultant

Sheryll Hickman

Onsite Coordinator, Kearney Retail Store and Training Center

2007 Benchmarks

- Reached an all-time high of 252 members, including 82 new members. Twenty-eight were the result of an existing member's referral.
- Membership sustained an 80% renewal rate.
- The eCommerce site, www.buygrownebraska.org, was launched.
- A year round store and training center opened at Kearney's Hilltop Mall.
- Micro businesses who hadn't previously belonged to REAP could join that program at no additional charge.
- Total sales generated by GROW Nebraska's special retail opportunities were \$258,950
- The GROW Book replaced the Gift Guide, profiling 177 members. Print copies were distributed through retail members, the web site and retail opportunities.
- A new database was developed to increase efficiency in tracking data and in the administration of the program's vital and growing web site.
- Staff participated in the Association for Enterprise Opportunity's Regional Flavor Learning Cluster. GROW works with Karen Kollars of the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism to increase promotion of agri-, eco-, and cultural tourism in the state.
- Launched the GROW Nebraska Art project. Alison Osborne of Ali-O Jewelry was retained as Coordinator and in May led a delegation of eight artists to the American Craft Retailers Expo in Las Vegas. A web site was established to focus on fine art.
- Continued the summer intern program with three interns.
- Promoted Nebraska entrepreneurs and their products, services and art at a variety of public appearances.
- A new level of membership was introduced for Economic Development partners.
- GROW strives to partner with all organizations in the field and frequently refers members and inquiring parties to REAP, EDGE and other programs throughout the state.
- REAP presented their Women & Company® Microenterprise Boost Program awardees at GROW Nebraska's Spring Membership Meeting.

Friends of GROW

Corporate Platinum Sponsorship: \$1,500 or more

ATC Communications
First National Bank of Omaha
Great Plains Communications
National Endowment for the Arts
Nebraska Cooperative Development Center
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism
Nebraska Microenterprise Partnership Fund
Nebraska Public Power District
Nebraska Rural Development Commission
Rural Enterprise Assistance Program (REAP)
Source Gas
US Bank

Corporate Gold Sponsorship: \$1,000

Nebraska Arts Council

Corporate Silver Sponsorship: \$750

Security First Bank (Elwood, Cozad and Overton)

Corporate Bronze Sponsorship: \$500

Bank of Bertrand
First Central Bank (McCook, Arapahoe, Cambridge and Edison)
First National Bank of Johnson
First State Bank of Holbrook
First State Bank of Loomis & Alma
TierOne Bank

Corporate Friend Sponsorship: \$499 or less

Chief Industries
First State Bank of Gothenburg, Omaha and Ralston

Enterpriser Friend: \$350 - \$499

Signature Performance

Supporter Friend: \$150 - \$349

Gary Peterson
IM's Countryside Painting
Janell Anderson Ehrke

Donor Friend: \$25 - \$149

Don Macke and Community Assistance Initiative
Seven Pines Crafts