

Community Council Nominees

June 2007

Mitch Arnold

Move Back to Nebraska, Omaha

Jason Barelman

Wayne State College

Dean Folkers

Department of Education

Darla Heggem

Twin Cities Development, Scottsbluff-Gering

Bethanne Kunz

Valley County Economic Development

Joan Modrell

Department of Labor

Caleb T. Pollard

Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Angie Ramaekers

Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce

Rivkah Sass

Omaha Public Library

Dan Shundoff

Intellicom, Kearney

Mitch Arnold

Mitch is the president of Preferred Partners, LLC. In this role, he is responsible for the overall development of the company, relationship management, and sales and marketing strategies.

A seasoned sales and marketing professional, Mitch brings a diverse background to his projects.

After graduating from the University of Nebraska-Kearney with two degrees in four years, Mitch was an English and journalism teacher, as well as a golf coach at Columbus Scotus High School for three years. He also spent a summer during that time working as a technical editor for the American Institute of Biological Sciences in downtown Washington, DC.

In 1995, Mitch moved to North Carolina to begin a career in public relations, working as one of two public relations specialists at North Carolina A&T State University. It was there that he began developing Web sites, which led him to establishing his first business, Mitch Arnold Technical Communication, in 1996.

During the next six years, Mitch completed the M.S. in Technical Communication at North Carolina State University, and established a successful NASCAR-themed retail operation in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In 2002, Mitch and his partner sold the NASCAR business, and he returned to his native Nebraska, where he became a founding partner in Preferred Partners, LLC.

Mitch's specialties include business development, sales solutions, electronic commerce and marketing, and public relations strategies. He is also the author of several widely distributed articles in the field of technical communication.

He is a member of the Omaha Young Republicans, and was recently appointed by the Governor to the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board.

Mitch and his wife Lynda have two children and are members of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Gretna.

Dean Folkers

Dean Folkers currently serves as the Assistant Director for Nebraska Career Education (NCE) at the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). The appointment with NDE includes responsibilities for administrative functions of the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act that supports secondary and postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs. Specific focus areas include fiscal and accountability oversight of the grant operations and support of technology support services. Additional responsibilities focus on the efforts of management and leadership with the Curriculum and Instruction team to achieve the mission of supporting learning, earning, and living opportunities for Nebraskans.

Dean, a native Nebraskan, has worked as an educator, with both high school and adult audiences, and for a national nonprofit student youth leadership development organization located in Washington, DC. The specific experiences with the national student organization focused on partnership and community development efforts along with engagement and training of teachers throughout the United States. Dean resides in Lincoln, Nebraska with his wife and two sons.

A commitment to pursuing options for the use of technology to provide services and identifying connections of these resources for ease and access to all citizens of Nebraska is a passion applied to Dean's daily work. Dean received his Bachelors and Masters from the University of Nebraska- Lincoln and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership.

Bethanne Kunz

Bethanne grew up in Ord, Nebraska and returned home after attending college. Kunz has been in her current position since 2000. Her duties include business recruitment, existing business growth, marketing, housing, leadership development, public relations and other community development programs.

Bethanne serves as Secretary and Treasurer of the Central Nebraska Economic Development District. She serves as Vice President for the Nebraska Economic Developers Association and also serves on the board for the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Bethanne graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science from College of Saint Mary in 1999. She earned a Master of Business Administration in May 2004 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is also a graduate of the Heartland Basic Economic Development Course and a graduate of the Institute for Organization Management.

Bethanne and her husband, Adam, own and operate an underground sprinkler and landscaping company in Ord.

Joan Modrell

Joan Modrell is currently Executive Director for the Office of Workforce Security, Department of Labor. Before coming to Workforce Security, Modrell served as Special Assistant to the Commissioner where she led the transition and implementation of the Workforce Investment Act for the 88-county Greater Nebraska Area.

Joan previously served as Director of the Urban Development Department for the City of Lincoln. Prior to that, she had previously served Nebraska as Job Training Program Coordinator. A native of McCook, Nebraska, Joan earned her bachelor's degree from Chadron State College. She went on to obtain a master's degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Her current duties include the Unemployment Insurance Benefit Program, Nebraska's Career Center system, Labor Market Information, Veterans Programs, and the Workforce Investment Act. The Office of Workforce Security has approximately 300 staff, 21 Career Centers, one Claims Center, and administrative staff.

Caleb Pollard

- Born and raised in Nehawka, NE.
- Moved to Kearney, then to Minnesota. After graduation from John Marshall High, Rochester MN, I moved back to Nebraska to attend UNL.
- There I focused my degree of studies on international sustainable development, a self designed major that incorporated rural revitalization, political science, community & regional planning, economic growth and development, environmental studies and Latin American studies.
- I was given the opportunity to work at three internships - 1 with Senator Cap Dierks at the NE State Legislature, another as Nebraska Community Improvement Program Intern at DED and finally as Research Specialist for the Urban Community Improvement Program, NCIP's sister program at UNL. My internships were instrumental in the decision to pursue my career professionally.
- Professionally, I worked in a dot-com that dot-bombed, then in healthcare research at National Research here in Lincoln before making my transition to DED as Workforce Development Consultant.
- Happily, I'm married and raising 1 beautiful son with another child on the way in 7 short weeks.
- I also like long walks on the beach and gardening.

Angie Ramaekers

I have been in my current role as Drive for Five Coordinator with the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce since May 1, 2007. As the Drive for Five Coordinator, I am coordinating the effort to recruit and/or retain 500 workers to the Columbus area by 2010. This is being done through a variety of efforts including recruitment events, marketing to area alumni, presentations to students, educators, businesses, civic clubs, etc. Prior to my current position, I was employed with Nebraska Workforce Development-Department of Labor since July, 2000. During my employment with Nebraska Workforce Development, I assisted employers and job seekers in their respective employment needs as well case managed clients who were receiving training through the WIA training program. In addition to my paid work activities, I also volunteer in a variety of capacities. I am the Columbus Area Director for Dream It Do It, which is a volunteer position. I serve on the Board of Directors for Columbus Collaborative Team (since 2002), have been the Chair and Co-chair of the Diversity Standing Committees of the Columbus Collaborative Team (2001-2006), as well Chair of a scholarship program for the Columbus Noon Optimist Club (2002-2004), and countless other volunteer activities on as needed basis.

Dan Shundoff

Dan Shundoff is the President, CEO, and Founder of Intellicom. He is the leader and visionary of Intellicom and provides the strategic direction for the company. He is a man of honesty, integrity, and commitment, and has a clear sense of how these values relate to our priorities as a company.

Before founding Intellicom, Dan was a Senior Proposal Analyst in the New Business Department for Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, Connecticut. His department was responsible for submitting proposals to the federal government for the Blackhawk helicopter and its derivatives, including the Special Operations Aircraft.

Dan received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, in 1987. Dan has been presented with several business awards including, the 2006 Walter Scott Entrepreneurial Award, presented by the University of Nebraska President, the 2003 Nebraska Business Innovation Award, presented by the Nebraska Diplomats, and the 2007 Champion of Small Business Regional Award, presented by NBDC.

Dan's community involvement includes:

- ◆ Board of Directors and Chairman, Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Board of Directors, Buffalo County Economic Development Council
- ◆ Board of Directors, Great Platte River Road Archway
- ◆ Board of Directors and Chairman, Kearney Country Club
- ◆ Member, J.B. Milliken's President's Advisory Council
- ◆ Member, UNK College of Business and Technology Advisory Council
- ◆ Member, UNK College of Natural and Social Sciences Advisory Council

Dan resides in Kearney with his wife Karen and their four wonderful children, Brandon, Kayla, Courtney, and Nicole. Dan keeps himself busy with family activities, including golf, camping and other outdoor activities.