

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE OF
GOVERNOR DAVE HEINEMAN
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The Season of Giving
By Governor Dave Heineman
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Dear Fellow Nebraskans:

As we prepare to celebrate the season of giving and spending time with friends and family, I want to highlight some of the efforts made by state workers this year who have also chosen to give back to their communities. This is a time when many of us donate to our favorite charities or volunteer time to make the holidays brighter for someone else.

Every year, the Nebraska State Employees Charitable Giving campaign gives employees wherever they work the opportunity to donate to a network of charitable organizations across the state. Participating employees can make cash or check donations or set aside a portion of their earnings to organizations across Nebraska.

This year, more than 4,000 workers contributed to the Nebraska State Employees Charitable Giving campaign. They raised over \$531,000 for charities across the state – a 20% increase from last year's efforts. For the last three years, the State of Nebraska has been the largest donor for the Lincoln and Lancaster County United Way, and this is the first time the State Campaign has raised over \$500,000. The money donated by state workers makes up an important portion of funding for many of these groups.

For the last three years, the State of Nebraska has been recognized as the number one overall campaign by the Lincoln and Lancaster County United Way and has also received additional honors including recognition for leadership giving. Since 2003, the State's campaign has raised more than 3.5 million dollars to support more than 400 charitable organizations throughout Nebraska. This year's 20% increase is in part attributed to some large increases in agency donations.

In addition to what employees give throughout the year, many departments have developed their own traditions of giving during the holidays.

For more than 25 years, the Nebraska National Guard has been extensively involved with the Operation Santa program in Lincoln. The Lincoln office of the Department of Roads has packed

up boxes of clothes, coats, personal care items, and food and delivered donations to a capital city shelter for the past 20 years.

Each year, the Office of the Chief Information Officer sponsors a Holiday Giving Project. This year, the planning committee chose the local chapter of the Salvation Army as their benefactor. They fulfilled the wishes of 51 local children including toys and clothing. In addition, they collected items for the homeless on the streets to include blankets and winter clothing. Through their 'Jean-Day' sales and collection buckets, the agency also raised almost \$2,000 in cash.

For the past five years, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture staff has adopted a family in need to provide presents and items that will make for a memorable holiday. The staff graciously donated items on the family's wish list. The gifts are then wrapped and delivered to the families in time for Christmas.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's new Hunters Helping the Hungry program works with charitable organizations to distribute deer meat to Nebraskans in need. Hunters donate the deer to contracted processors and the entire program is entirely funded by cash donations.

These are a few examples of how State of Nebraska workers give back. There are also countless examples of kindness and thoughtfulness on display in schools, offices and families across our state at this time of year.

Nebraskans are very giving and very caring people. To all those who have taken time to make the holiday season brighter for someone else in our state, thank you for your generosity.

Merry Christmas, happy holidays and best wishes for a great 2013.

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