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(Neb.)-Local Businesses Awarded Governor's 2013 Wellness Award

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(LINCOLN)-Gov. Dave Heineman has announced the 2013 recipients of the Governor's Wellness Award. This year, 50 Nebraska employers will be honored for successful efforts in promoting workplace wellness.

Local businesses receiving the Grower award this year include Fred A. Lockwood & Company PC, Panhandle Public Health District, State Farm Insurance, and the Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District.

A total of 203 awards have been given since the program began six years ago. Nebraska is one of only a handful of states nationwide honoring wellness efforts of employers.

"These awards recognize employers for their serious commitment to employee well-being," said Gov. Heineman. "Prevention and wellness efforts in the workplace have produced higher productivity, better employee satisfaction and helped control health care costs. Wellness works every time. These programs are helping more Nebraskans lead healthier lives."

The award was created to recognize Nebraska employers who have developed successful models for encouraging wellness at work. Representatives from companies in greater Nebraska will be honored at a luncheon in Kearney on Thursday, September 26th, and in Gering on Thursday, October 3rd. Businesses located in the Lincoln and Omaha area will be recognized at the WorkWell and Nebraska Safety Council luncheon in Lincoln on Wednesday, October 16th.

Factors considered for the award include the level of support for the program by company leaders, assessment of employee needs, wellness plan design, outcomes and benefits, and policies supporting healthy behaviors. Wellness programs typically provide employees with health education, health screenings and opportunities for exercise.

Dr. Joseph Acierno, Nebraska's Chief Medical Officer, said, "Nebraska's wellness program for state employees has received national attention for being a leader in workplace wellness programs. That's because our program empowers employees to make good decisions about the health risk factors in their lives. As a result, workers can take action to avoid chronic illnesses that can adversely impact their health and affect their quality of life. We hope to encourage more businesses in Nebraska to offer employee health and wellness programs."

Nebraska's workplace wellness program offers two categories. The Sower Award recognizes workplaces that have recently established quality wellness programs, and the Grower Award honors businesses and organizations that have demonstrated significant improvement in employee health status through their wellness programs.

Businesses receiving the Grower award this year are:

All Points Cooperative

Cabela's

Central District Health Department

Chief Industries

Duncan Aviation

Fred A. Lockwood & Co PC

Kawasaki Motors Manufacturing Corp., U.S.A.

Lincoln Airport Authority

Lincoln Electric System

Lincoln Public Schools

Little Blue NRD

Lower Loup Natural Resources District

Lower Platte South NRD

Mary Lanning Healthcare

Nelnet

Nye Senior Services-Nye Square

Panhandle Public Health District

Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District

Pen-Link

RDG Planning & Lamp Design

Speedway Motors, Inc.

State Farm Insurance

Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District

Upper Republican Natural Resources District

Warren Distribution, Inc.

Woodmen of The World

Sower award recipients include:

Arbor Day Foundation

Aurora Public Schools

Broken Bow Public Schools

David City Public Schools
Dial Retirement Communities
Dodge County Head Start
East Butler Public Schools
Educational Service Unit #2
Five Points Bank of Hastings
Harvard Public School
Lexington Public Schools
Marian High School
Nebraska Association of Resources Districts
Nemaha Natural Resources District
Norfolk Public Schools
Norris School District
Orthman Manufacturing
Peru State College
Sandhills Public Schools
South Central Unified at Lawrence/Nelson
Sutherland Public School
Tri Valley Health System
Tri-Basin NRD
Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District

Nebraska businesses can apply for the Governor's Wellness Award online at www.nebraska.gov/wellness. Awards are presented annually and are good for three years. The award program is a partnership of the office of the governor, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, WorkWell, Inc. and the Nebraska Safety Council.

--Office of Governor Dave Heineman