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## Local view: Partnerships a proven model

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## **Local view: Partnerships a proven model**

TONN OSTERGARD, DANA BRADFORD, TOM HENNING, JoANN MARTIN and LARRY MILLER  
Apr 8, 2017

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our years ago, we turned the first shovel of dirt at Nebraska Innovation Campus.

**F**Leaders in Nebraska education, business and government had outlined a bold vision for this public-private venture adjacent to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. We wanted to combine the expertise of UNL faculty with the resources of the private sector to bring research breakthroughs to market, attract talent to our state and grow Nebraska's workforce and economy.

Almost 20 private partners, tens of thousands of visitors, and hundreds of jobs and student internships later, our only regret is that we didn't start down this path decades earlier.

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Innovation Campus – and the philosophy of partnership it embodies – is the right strategy for Nebraska. In public-private partnerships, we have a proven approach for bringing together the ideas and resources of diverse sectors to advance our shared goals for economic growth, education and quality of life.

And at a time when we need to be making strategic decisions that will position Nebraska's economy for long-term success, our commitment to partnership is as important as it has ever been. Success will require all of us – business and education leaders, community members, private donors and policymakers – to work together, as we've done so productively throughout our state's history.

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It's an approach we call "P4": public-private-philanthropic partnerships. P4 works – because it is grounded in the fact that together, we can accomplish so much more than what any individual sector could on its own.

The P4 approach has enabled Innovation Campus to surge in importance in its young existence, thanks to state lawmakers, UNL, Tetrad Property Group, the City of Lincoln, the Robert B. Daugherty Foundation and a growing number of private sector tenants. We've said from the outset that it will take 25 years or more to realize NIC's full potential. But as Phase 2 of development gets underway, NIC's list of private partners in residence is growing, with a university-spinoff tech startup and biopharmaceutical company announcing their affiliations in the past few weeks alone. The NIC-based Alliance for Advanced Sanitation, too, is engaging leading industry partners like ConAgra, Hershey's, Kellogg's, Nestle and 3M as it works to create a safer food supply.

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More mature university research parks across America demonstrate the profound impact of ongoing investment. The Research Triangle Park in North Carolina is a leading example. Within the Big Ten, the University of Wisconsin Madison Research Park, established in 1989, is home to more than 125 companies and accounts for more than 4,000 employees holding high-paying jobs that simply did not exist before the park was founded. Nebraska Innovation Campus is on the path to have that kind of impact, because the lifeblood of all industries is innovation, and innovation is often derived from research collaboration.

The P4 model also has breathed new life into Lincoln's Haymarket district. Pinnacle Bank Arena and other development there represent a remarkable example of shared investment that has forever changed the community.

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Down the road, the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center is poised to transform cancer care and research for the 1 of every 2 Nebraskans who will be diagnosed at some point in their lifetimes. The cancer center is more proof of what is possible when multiple sectors come together for the betterment of our state and citizens.

And the spirit of partnership is yielding similar benefits across our state. Research breakthroughs, job growth, innovations that improve lives, and new opportunities for young people are emerging wherever the best minds are seated around the same table.

Nebraskans can be proud of our tradition of working together to achieve the things we all want for our families and communities. Today's economy and competitive marketplace demand continued forward thinking.

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Fortunately, we have a strategy that works. Partnership between the public, private and philanthropic communities will continue to propel our economy and state into the future.

*Tonn Ostergard is president & CEO, Crete Carrier Corp. Dana Bradford is CEO, Waitt Brands. Tom Henning is chairman, president & CEO, Assurity Life Insurance Co. JoAnn Martin is president & CEO, Ameritas Life Insurance. Larry Miller is president, Phibro Animal Health. All are the private-sector board members for Nebraska Innovation Campus at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.*

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